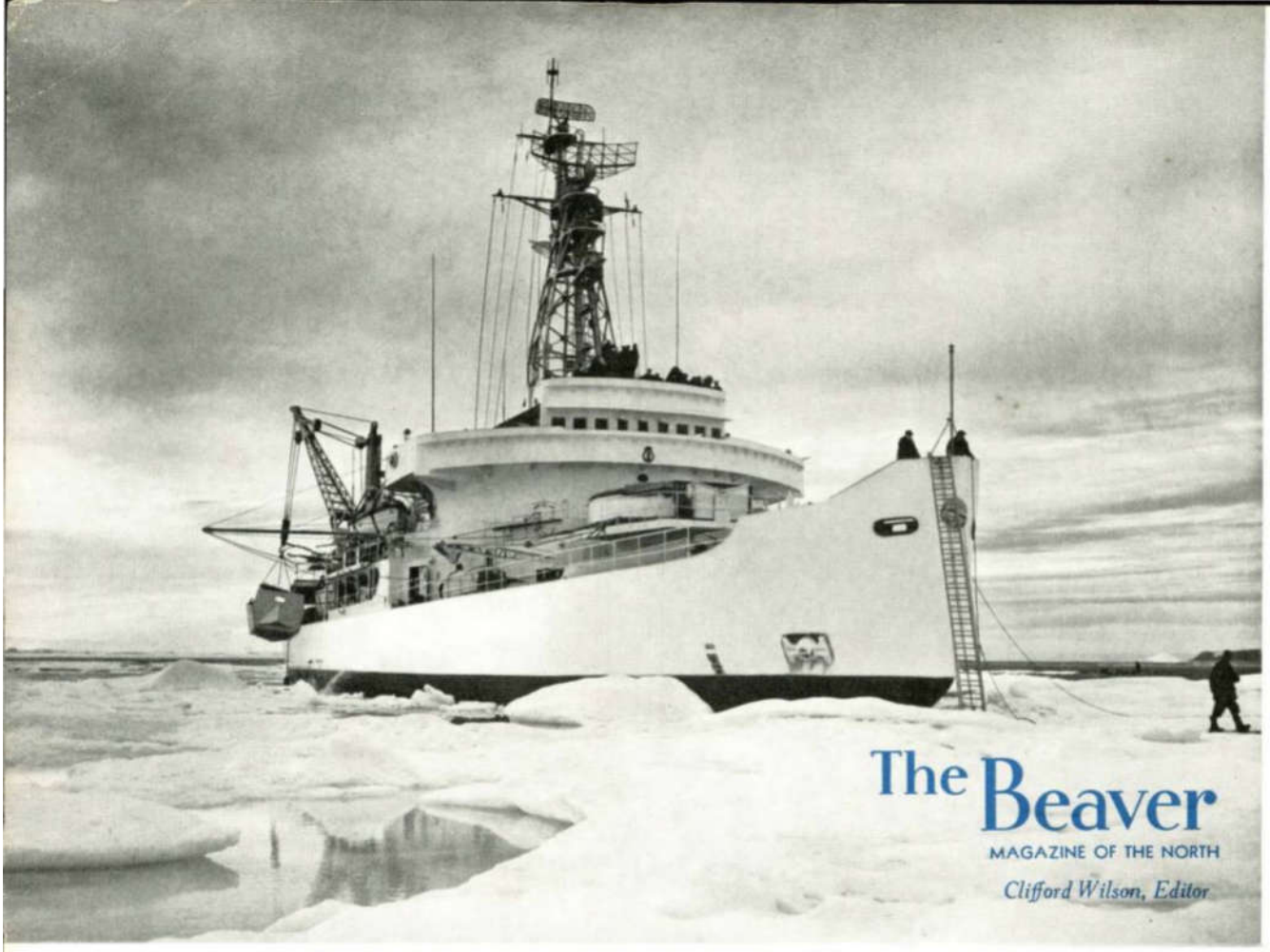
The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

SPRING, 1955

Kudluk gets a seal.

Peter E. Murdoch.



The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Clifford Wilson, Editor

H.M.C.S. "Labrador" patrolling the Canadian Arctic on her maiden voyage last summer. Royal Canadian Navy.

CONTENTS

OUTFIT 285 SPRING 1955

Enter the European—Jean Lesage ... 3

Sugar from Manitoba Maples—M. A. MacLeod 10

Athabasca Tar Sands—George Hunter ... 14

Liard River Voyage—R. M. Patterson ... 20

"Parthia" of the Pacific—Jim Faber ... 27

St. Lawrence Seaway - III—Rosemary Gilliat ... 30

Moose Fort Journals—J. W. Anderson ... 40

Naturalists on Back River
R. J. Wilkie and W. J. Breckenridge 42

Footnotes to the Franklin Search ... 46

Fur Trade Gossip Sheet—B. R. Ross ... 52

Spring Packet ... 54

Northern Books ... 56

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ENTER the EUROPEAN

V - Among the Eskimos

(Part II)

by the Honourable Jean Lesage

Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources

Drawings by James Houston

This completes the series of articles on the contacts of white men with aborigines of the New World, which the "Beaver" has been running since June 1953. Here the views expressed are those of the Canadian Government.

IT was three years after Confederation that the Canadian Government entered the far north. In 1870 the Hudson's Bay Company ceded to the Crown its territorial rights in Rupert's Land which, together with the Northwestern Territories, were then transferred by the United Kingdom to Canada; ten years later the remaining British lands in the Arctic archipelago were also given to the Canadian Government. During the remainder of the century there was little Government activity in the newly acquired lands apart from two expeditions, in 1885-6 and 1897, to investigate navigation conditions in Hudson Strait. In 1903 the Government decided to establish permanent stations for the collection of customs, the administration of justice and the enforcement of law as in other parts of the country. In the western Arctic a North West Mounted Police post was established at Herschel Island. To the east, Superintendent J. D. Moodie was appointed Acting Commissioner of the unorganized Northeastern Territories and, with a non-commissioned officer and four constables of the N.W.M.P., sailed in the C.G.S. *Neptune* to the eastern Arctic. During the voyage a police post was established at Fullerton.

The years between 1903 and the end of the first World War saw little further Government action in the far north. One or two more police posts were established, the C.G.S. *Arctic* made a series of expeditions. From 1913 to 1918 the Canadian Arctic expedition carried out its two-fold purpose of exploration and administration.

After the first World War the number of R.C.M.P. posts was increased and an annual patrol by ship was begun in the eastern Arctic. The administration of the North was the responsibility of the Department of the Interior; the administrative officer on the Eastern Arctic Patrol was the only direct contact between the administration in Ottawa and the North, though an increasing amount of administra-

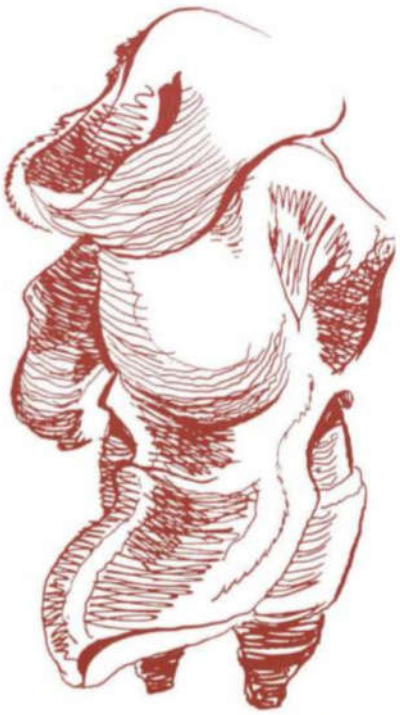
tive work was undertaken by the R.C.M.P. on behalf of the Department of the Interior. In addition, the appointment of Government doctors to the mission hospitals at Aklavik, Chesterfield Inlet and Pangnirtung indicated the growing awareness of the Government's responsibilities to the Eskimos.

The second World War affected the Eskimos both directly and indirectly. Directly it brought many of them into contact with large defence undertakings, and indirectly it made all their country far more accessible than ever before. The war also brought the problems of the Eskimos more forcefully to the attention of the Government and to the country as a whole, but it was not until peace was restored that the situation could be assessed and measures taken to strengthen the administration.

It is important not to obscure the present situation of the Eskimos of Canada and the direction that future plans should take by loading the premises with any but essential factors. For example, it may be stated that the Eskimo is self-reliant, of happy disposition, that time means something different to him than it does to other Canadians, or that he tends to be uninterested in providing for the future. Careful study of such characteristics is important when considering how to go about the task of aiding this primitive group. But in drawing the broad plan of Eskimo development, only the starting point and the objective are essential.

The objective of Government policy is relatively easy to define. It is to give the Eskimos the same rights, privileges, opportunities, and responsibilities as all other Canadians; in short, to enable them to share fully the national life of Canada. It is pointless to consider whether the Eskimo was happier before the white man came, for the white man has come and time cannot be reversed. The only realistic approach is to accept the fact that the Eskimo will be brought ever more under the influences of civilization to the south. The task, then, is to help him adjust his life and his thoughts to all that the encroachment of this new life must mean. In some places the encroachment has been slight. For those who can continue in the native way of life successfully—or can follow it more successfully than any other—little change may be necessary or desirable, so long as that condition lasts. Adjustment to our way of life must be related in character, time, and degree to the developing situation in each area, provided it is made quite clear that adjustment does not mean the loss of the identity of the Eskimos' culture.

This will take time, but there can be no other acceptable result in the long run. The main stream of Canadian culture as well as that of the Eskimo is undergoing constant change. The two parallel lines of development must tend to draw together because they will be subjected to the same governing influences, i.e., the same economic determinants, the same body of law and the same framework of opportunity in education, religion, employment, recreation, artistic expression, community and national life. The industrial society of the North American continent will not be greatly deflected from its course by receiving



this small group of Eskimo people and their culture. However, it will receive some influence, though the effects will be subtle and little noticed. Any such contribution should probably be counted an enrichment. Canadians have already learned to appreciate the art of the Eskimos.

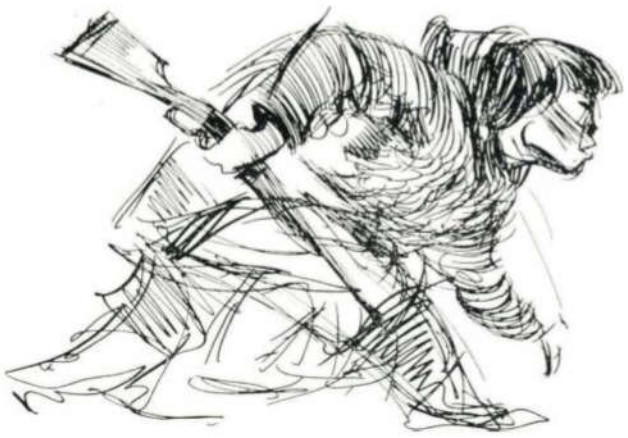
Here it may be worthwhile to ask why we are concerned with the Eskimos. It is obviously something more than sentimentalism which creates the demand for a vigorous attack on the dilemmas of a changing Eskimo society. We have, of course, a moral responsibility since geography and history have made the Eskimos of northern Canada part of our country. The moral responsibility is the greater because, for so long, men were content to change the ways of the north without stopping to reckon, let alone pay, the price of their influence. As soon as any white man made contact with or lived with the Eskimos, he began to dis-

turb the well-established pattern of their society. He was beginning to create the problems of adjustment which exist today. The accumulation of these problems created in past years by the contact of a few white men and by the vastly increased measure of contact today and in the immediate future are the responsibility of the nation as a whole.

If we do not accept this responsibility, we are denying the Eskimos the opportunity to participate freely in the life and activities of the nation. If he has an opportunity to do so the Eskimo will undoubtedly climb the ladder of civilization. He may feel the strain of the effort, and wonder, as all men do from time to time, whether a simpler life would not be more comfortable. But the Eskimo, like all other groups of the human family, will continue on what he considers to be the path to a better and more rewarding life. Sentimentalists of earlier days used to speak of the noble savage, of the degradations of civilization, of the beauties of primitive life and of a return to nature. Their counterparts today advise that the Eskimo be left alone lest he be spoiled.

It is easy to understand and share the regret often expressed at the passing of the self-sufficient primitive Eskimo. But a little reflection makes it clear that the preservation of the Eskimo in his primitive state is not a real alternative, for it is not possible. It would involve segregation and isolation from the increasing activity throughout the north. It would involve, moreover, the denial of the most humane services we can provide. The natural food resources of the Arctic are limited and the primitive Eskimo was a part of the balance of nature. As soon as we take measures to provide against starvation, to eradicate tuberculosis, to end infant exposure and the elimination of elderly dependents, and to improve health generally, we upset that balance. It is clear that Canadians would not be prepared to consider the sort of policy that would be essential to ensure the preservation of the "primitive" Eskimo.

Moreover, it is doubtful if Eskimos themselves regret the change. All men want to be free in the sense of not being kept under external restraint, but they also want to have free access to all avenues of human endeavour. The Eskimos do not have to be made over into white men. The only requirement is that they be admitted to full participation in all the opportunities that Canada affords her people. In order to make this a reality, a measure of extra assistance is necessary because of the remote geographical location and the hurdles of language and cultural differences.



In their present in-between state the Eskimos have received a few, a very few, of the benefits of our civilization. For their furs they have got some of our food, our tools, our clothing. This, however, is not enough to give in terms of the civilization we, through our contacts and ideas, have taken from them. The nation as a whole gives them family allowances, old age pensions, and relief when indigent. But the broader needs—and they are immediate needs—are health, education, and a sound economy. They are not separate problems, each is related to the other. It is not enough to cure disease, the cause of disease must be removed and this is largely a matter of education and improvement of economic conditions. Education must be provided, but this depends on good health and the needs of the economy. A sound economy means a diversified economy not based on the white fox alone; but for new occupations, both health and education are required. In providing health, education and the sound economy the complications are infinite. The area is enormous, the population small, communication extremely difficult. The patterns of the rest of Canada would be impossible to apply on grounds of cost alone. In recent years determined attack has been made on disease, particularly tuberculosis, involving local diagnosis with evacuation in most cases for treatment outside.

But even evacuation is more than an administrative problem. It is sociological. Doctors and administrators are reluctant to remove patients from their environment. If they do not do so, however, the likelihood of recovery from tuberculosis is reduced; in some cases the alternative is simple; the patient will die. All those concerned with the north are aware of significant statistics reflecting the consequences of attempting to treat advanced tuberculosis

in far northern hospitals without the services of trained specialists and the complete facilities that are available in the south. The compromise between the paramount medical problem and the important sociological problem is treatment of disease in its most serious stages in the south with rehabilitation stations in the north. This is a good example of the special kind of problem which the geography of the north imposes and it is an example of the kind of solution which must be found.

Government schools have been established to provide elementary education where the population justifies them, but it is not yet possible to reach the majority of children who live in small camps. Boarding schools entail long separation both from parents and from the traditional ways of life, and can result in a student returning home ill fitted for the life he must lead. Here perhaps the answer is itinerant instruction supplemented by radio. There is also a great need for vocational training if the growing generation of Eskimos is to be prepared for many occupations which are now, for the first time available to them.

The economy of the north has for years been based almost completely on the white fox with its cyclic population and widely fluctuating price. Family allowances have provided a new and very important source of income and have done much to neutralize the post-war failure of the white fox to maintain a steady value in terms of the goods which the Eskimo needs. Some new means of broadening the Eskimo income need not affect the traditional way of life significantly, and may indeed, capitalize on the skills of that life. The employment of Eskimos on alien installations, on weather and radio stations, on airfields, at radar posts, imposes a complete break with traditional ways and entails sharp changes both in social organization and in standards of living. The break must be made. Not only would it be foolish to deny the Eskimos the opportunity for useful employment in projects in their own country, but in the long run there will undoubtedly be great advantage in having them participate in these projects. Through their knowledge of the north the Eskimos will make an important contribution to Canada. It is a contribution

which could not be made before because not until now had the path of national development led us to the north. Today, however, for reasons which are political, scientific and strategic, for reasons which are likely some day to be economic, we are being drawn to the farthest reaches of our territory. The development of these lands will require the assistance of their oldest residents.

The present condition of Eskimos has come about as a result of unco-ordinated activities of the various agencies at work in the north—whalers, missionaries, traders and government. The bill to constitute the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources was the subject of a statement by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on December 8, 1953, in which he said that the government had in the past apparently administered ". . . these vast territories of the north in an almost continuing state of absence of mind." Because the matter had not previously been given effective consideration, defence establishments set up in the north during the war had varying effects on the Eskimos. Some establishments employed no Eskimos. In some a few were employed, usually at menial tasks. All such places were an attraction to Eskimos who found it interesting to see the new gadgets in staggering array—aircraft, bulldozers, ships, landing barges. The speed with which buildings were erected and airstrips built was at once fascinating and incomprehensible.

The net effect has been to congregate people into groups that are not able to subsist when it is once more necessary to live by hunting and trapping. Physical location with reference to game resources is not the only reason such groups may not be viable. The skills of the individuals can be lost in only a few years and, perhaps more important, the zest for the primitive life can be lost. Without the latter there is little hope for re-establishment of a hunter on the land. This quality is not primarily subjective—alone the man and his family cannot create it. Essential contributions from the group are necessary in building a social unit that requires duties from each of its members to enable it to survive. The duties establish routines, ceremonies and obligations, and in turn the individual draws direction, reassurance, and spiritual sustenance from these social relationships. The importance of this is probably great enough to justify it being regarded as a requisite to survival for primitive people everywhere. Writing on the aborigines of the South Pacific in an earlier article in this series, Margaret Mead suggests, ". . . on some islands the people, deprived of all their gay and complex, though often savage ceremonials, simply died out, uninterested in reproducing themselves in a world that had lost its zest . . .". Something of this tendency is perhaps present in the Arctic.

The same report is heard commonly throughout the North. The Eskimos are losing their self-reliance and initiative, and there are no longer any leaders in the camps. The traders deplore it, but thus far they have not encouraged any signs of Eskimos acting as middlemen in trading. The R.C.M.P. deplore it, but their duty is to administer Canadian law and the Eskimo who attempts to follow the traditional legal practices is likely to end in jail. The missions deplore it, but they must oppose the old pagan beliefs. The doctors deplore it, but they cannot approve the shamans' methods of healing. It is not surprising therefore that the Eskimo is losing his independence, when initiative in so many fields leads only to no end of trouble, and the appealing solution is to do nothing. At the same time the government is providing care for the aged, the blind, the indigent, and family allowances and education for the children, responsibilities which used to be those of the relatives. There is nothing to replace these lost responsibilities.

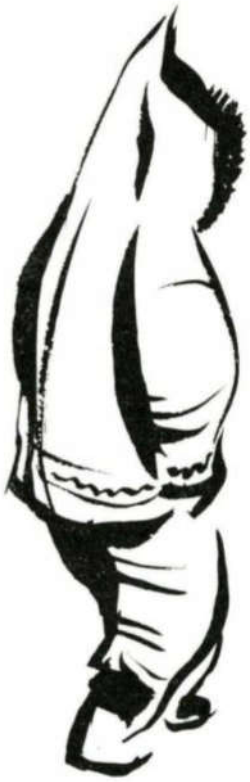
Thus a new social order is supplanting the primitive life of the Eskimos. In the new order, however, direction is given by the various white men on the scene. The Eskimo inevitably tends to lose initiative individually and collectively in such a regime. It seems obvious that an effort to place the direction of local affairs in the hands of the

Eskimos is desirable. In this matter we can learn from the Indian Affairs administrations which in both Canada and the United States have had conspicuous success with band councils and other community activities that centre in the people themselves rather than in superimposed leadership. We can learn also from studying programs with similar objectives among Eskimos in Greenland and Alaska.

The northern service officers who have recently been appointed in the Arctic Division of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, are being instructed to encourage the Eskimos to take responsibility for local decisions to as great an extent as possible. What will prove to be feasible in this matter will depend on factors that vary from place to place. There will probably be least success where the life of the people differs little from the traditional life, for the very good reason that the traditional social organization still serves. More success should be expected in places where there is wage employment, education is a significant force, and there are new community activities. Any supposition that such fundamental new concepts will take hold rapidly and effectively would be naive. Any kind of council in the ordinary sense could not be expected to function at first and perhaps not for some time. A starting method would perhaps be more along the lines of a town meeting with many talks with men and women of prestige to make sure that support will be forthcoming. Subject matter to be handled could well start with such vital things as sanitation and the administration of relief.

It has been asked whether there are not already too many white men issuing orders to the Eskimo and whether the northern service officer will be just one more. The remedy, however, does not lie in confining this kind of authority to one or two, but rather in returning local responsibility and authority to the people. It would be rash to offer a blueprint. It will doubtless be necessary to proceed from trial to revision repeatedly, looking not to the day when the pattern will be set for all time but to the time when revisions will be suggested by the Eskimos.

Much instruction can be obtained from studying the development of the Greenlander. The achievements of the Danes have not been made without stresses of several kinds from time to time. Greenlanders are literate, competent in managing local councils and business of the country generally, and participants in Danish national affairs through elected members of the Danish parliament. Observers have noted however, a growing interest in their



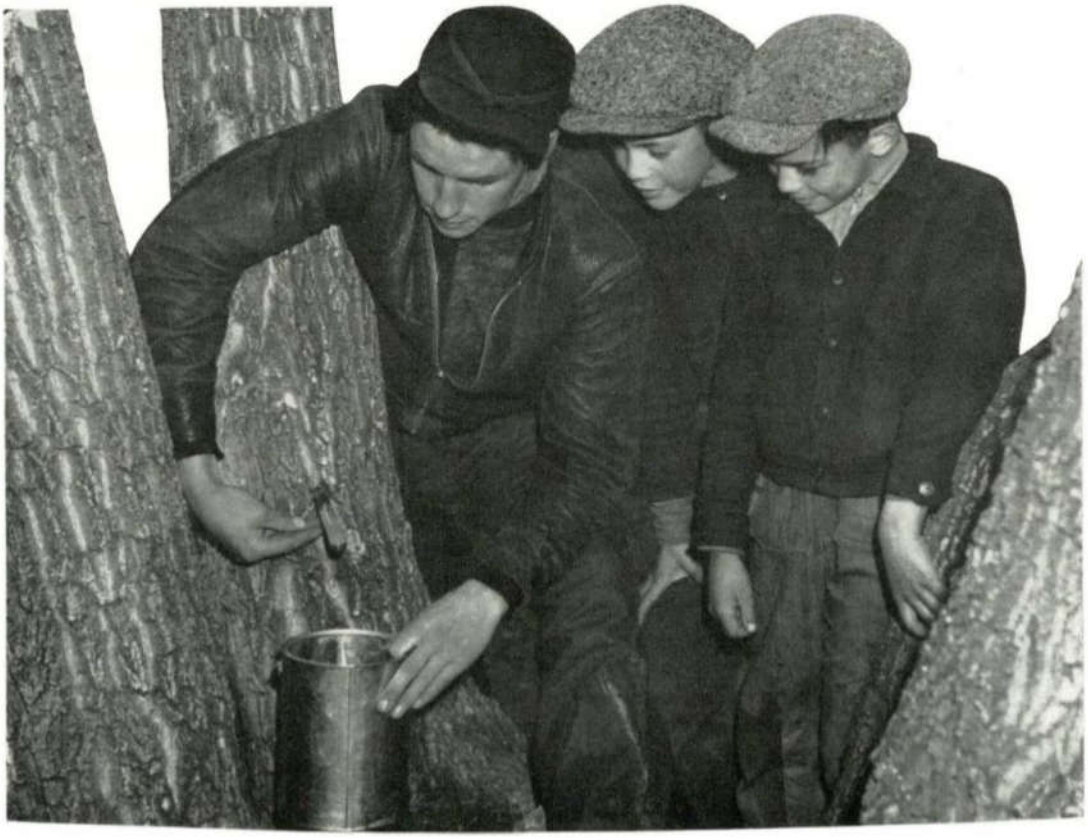
Eskimo heritage, in preserving some of the cultural remnants that are peculiarly theirs. The history of development of primitive peoples all over the world shows similar reactions at an appropriate stage. Some Canadian Indians are in it now; Canadian Eskimos will reach this stage in due course if they follow a similar path of development.

There are certainly many immediate problems. Game resources do not adequately and reliably support the present population in many places. Game tends to decrease in abundance while population is increasing, and under the health and welfare programs which are being extended every year, the rate of increase may become greater. A hunter's life is always precarious and sometimes disaster strikes his family as well. As a rule, even other Eskimos are without knowledge of such tragedies until after the event. Administrators and all others in the north are alert

for news of people in trouble but in practice many hunters and their families are completely out of touch and often hundreds of miles away from other people for months at a time. In such circumstances an illness such as food poisoning or influenza affecting the hunters may mean death to all before the need for help is known. More frequent visits by government officers will help, and so also will some means of sending a message of distress.

The present Eskimo income is not only low but precarious and there is pressing need for additional sources. This means in effect a diversification of the economy wherever possible. There are many projects that have this objective and which are being fostered in part by the Administration. Eskimo stone carvings and other handicrafts are of appreciable value to people in many areas, being bought through the regular traders and finding a remarkably receptive market throughout Canada and in other countries as well. The Canadian Handicrafts Guild sponsored the first collections and marketing and has continued as the main agency in the work. Their interest is non-profit. In co-operation with the Hudson's Bay Company and the Guild the department hopes to see effective steps to protect this native art from any possible diminution in value, monetary or artistic, and to see that the artist receives as high a return as possible. A measure of success has been obtained in boat-building projects at Lake Harbour and Tuktoyaktuk, the former sponsored by the Hudson's Bay Company, the latter under mission auspices. Some Eskimo families have been helped to move to places where they may win a better livelihood and this policy may be extended. Collection and marketing of eiderdown, tanning of sealskins for use in handicrafts, sewing, and furniture making, animal and poultry husbandry, commercial fishing, coal mining, whaling, tourism, may have possibilites. Some may not prove to be feasible but the basis on which they are being examined is that no reasonable chance should be ignored.

The task is long, and considering the number of people involved it is expensive. The alternative is to do nothing and to witness the gradual deterioration of the remaining Eskimo culture. If this were to happen, in the absence of a replacing culture, the deterioration of the people would be inevitable. The resulting situation would be even more expensive, and there would be no end to it. A carefully developed program can transform the future of these people from that of a financial liability to an asset. The value in human terms cannot be so simply expressed, but it is a value of the highest importance and one which Canadians are clearly determined shall be achieved. ♦



Jules Allard taps a Manitoba or ash-leaved maple in the modern way.

MANITOBA MAPLE SUGAR

For centuries the Manitoba Maple has been furnishing syrup and sugar to Indians and white men.

by Margaret Arnett MacLeod

Photos from Winnipeg Free Press

IT was a fine day early in April. In the sugar bush on his father's farm, thirty-five miles west of Winnipeg, young Jules Allard bored a hole in a Manitoba maple tree with a brace and bit. He inserted a "spile" or tap, made of a slender five-inch length of cranberry wood with a hole burned through. He whittled it to fit, and placed a pail beneath, into which the sap would drain. Jules tapped a tree in a jiffy. It was routine work with him. He tapped 200 trees on the home place every spring.

Grandfather Allard, too, was tapping trees, but in a more primitive fashion. He ran practised fingers along the edge of the modern axe in his hands. It was sharp but he would have felt more at home for this task with a "long tripping-axe" such as was used in early days. With a vigorous swing he cut a slanting gash in the tree trunk, penetrating just beneath the bark, and into it he drove a flat wedge of wood. From the lower end of this—a fairly large grooved chip—the sap would run into the pail on the ground beneath.

This work was nothing new to him either, for he, like many another old timer in the west, had tapped thousands of trees—tapped them ever since he was young. The Allard farm is on No. 1 highway, and the maple bush is on a point of land in a bend of the Assiniboine River.

The bends in the prairie rivers, peninsulas almost entirely surrounded by water, were the places where the maple trees flourished, and where, from the time of the Indians to the present day, the maple sugar industry has been carried on. For it is the young trees that give the best sap—and the most—and in order to grow big while still young they have to have plenty of moisture at their roots.

These maple trees in Manitoba, called the ash leaved or Red River, maple, or box elder, have been given the botanical name, *Acer negundo*. They are a different species from the *Acer saccharum*, the sugar or hard maple, from which the people in Quebec, Ontario, and the Maritime Provinces make their sugar, and from the *Acer rubrum* or red maple which is also found in the east. When Alexander Henry (the younger), a fur trader who came to the west in 1799, found the Indians tapping the western maples and making sugar, he called this type of tree "the bastard maple" to distinguish it from the eastern varieties. The Canadians, he wrote, called the tree *èrable à gigoire.** The sugar content of the sap from the western maple is less

Mrs. MacLeod, a contributor to the Beaver *for many years, specializes in the details of fur trade and Red River history. This is probably the most complete article on Manitoba maple sugar that has appeared in print.*

**Giguere.* Even Brother Marie-Victorin, the celebrated botanist, is uncertain about the meaning of this word.

than that of the eastern species, which means that more boiling is required. A professor who interested himself in the technical aspect of "the maple sugar of the Northwest" told a Senate committee in 1887 that the sap contained two and a half per cent of sugar to its weight.

Long before white settlers came, the Indians had discovered the sweetness of the sap and had worked out a method of boiling it down. Anyone who has heard the guttural words of glee and the shrieks of laughter of the Indian women and their followers, as they set out each spring for the sugar camp, will appreciate what a delight the maple sugar making was all through the years. An Irish immigrant, writing home to his sister in 1832, expressed the same delight: "But what flogged all that I had ever seen," he wrote "was making sugar out of a tree, Mary—not a word of a lie do I tell you; you take a big gimlet and make a hole in the tree, (the *maypole*, I think they call it,) and out comes the shuggar, like sweet water thick like, and you boil it, and you—but where's the use of my telling you any thing about it, as you have no sugar trees at home. I remember when you and I thought a shuggar stick, a mighty good sort of thing, never thinking I'd lay my eyes on a shuggar tree."

Alexander Henry soon learned this eager anticipation of the maple sugar season. After spending the winter of 1799-1800 at a camp he established in the Riding Mountains, he made sugar there the following spring. From 1800 to 1808, Henry was in charge of the Lower Red River department for the North West Company. At his headquarters along the Red River, near the international border, sugar making was one of the industries carried on, and sugar, as well as furs and pemmican, appeared in the annual returns of the department. There were times of near starvation for Henry and his people, but there seems a hint of relief and of pleasanter things in store in entries made in his journal each year in late March and early April. "The small bastard maple begins to run." "The Indian women making new sugar." Again, "Snow all gone . . . women making sugar." Then the sugar would begin to come in and the entries would read: "Mr. Hesse arrived from Red Lake . . . bringing twelve kegs of sugar." "Sent off six carts drawn by two horses each, for the 40 kegs of sugar. Several of the kegs weigh 100 lbs."

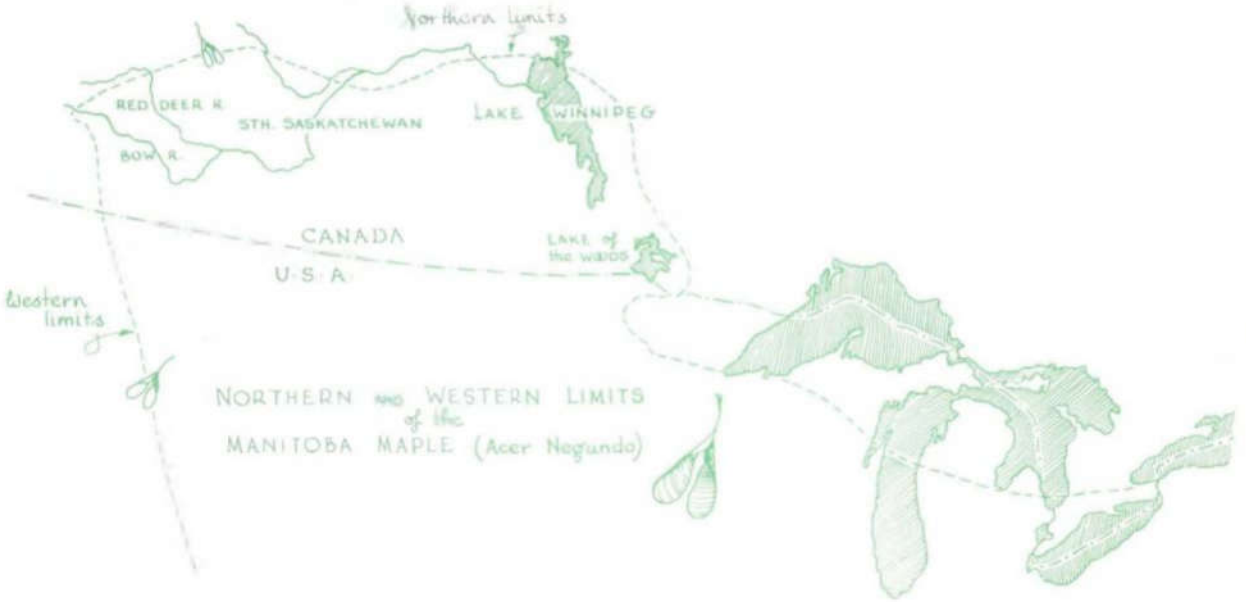
About the same period, at Swan River fort, Daniel Harmon records in his journal of April 19, 1801: "Nearly a foot of snow . . . caused the river to overflow its banks to such a distance, that our people who were making sugar, were obliged to leave the woods and return to the fort."

Vinegar was one of the by-products from the maple sap. By 1804, Henry had a stoutly stockaded fort and a good garden, from which, as he recorded on September 19 of that year, he gathered his cucumbers, "and made a nine-gallon keg of pickles, having plenty of excellent vinegar from maple sap, little inferior to that imported."

Red Lake (now in Minnesota) was a place from which the Indians brought canoe loads of sugar each spring. One year Henry mentioned twenty Indian canoes coming to the post, and his purchase of ten kegs of sugar. On one occasion, he operated a large sugar camp near Red Lake. Three hundred pounds of sugar were consumed at the camp, sixteen hundred pounds were brought back to the post, and also thirty-six gallons of syrup.

Other sources mentioned in the returns of Henry's department were Portage la Prairie and "Rivière aux Islets de Bois," that is, Boyne River near Carman, Manitoba, which was a noted sugar-making region in later years. "I started Mr. Cadotte with a man for Rivière aux Islets de Bois with one of our new carts," wrote Henry on May 5, 1803, and later he recorded Cadotte's return with the cart well loaded with sugar and a few skins. These new carts were some of the first carts in the country.

It seems probable that most of the maple sugar and syrup was consumed at the posts and outposts which were under Henry's jurisdiction. (One of these outposts, for a time, it is interesting to note, was at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, where Winnipeg now stands.) The shipments he sent forward were not large. Forty-eight kegs, containing 3,159 pounds of sugar, the 1808 consignment, was the largest.



Mrs. Allard empties a pail of sap into the boiling cauldron while her daughters look on.

After Alexander Henry passed on to Fort Vermilion on the Saskatchewan, nothing more is heard of the maple sugar industry during the years of the war between the rival fur companies and the establishment of the Selkirk settlers on the Red River. With the amalgamation of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821, the records of the new Hudson's Bay Company begin to supply information on the making of maple sugar. One of Gov. George Simpson's first efforts was to encourage production and to cut down costly imports. The Minutes of Council contained detailed instructions on the making of maple sugar, and suggested that the Indians be constantly employed in hunting and in the making of sugar to keep them away from the Settlement. In July 1822, when prices were set for native products, sugar was rated at 8d. a pound, and Indian corn at 10s. per bushel, delivered at the depots, or at half that price if left inland. In 1823, "Sugar mapple" was 4d. a pound, the same price as "fat geese fresh or salted," or "1 pair Indian track shoes."

The minutes of 1822 directed Chief Factor John McLoughlin, then of Rainy Lake District, "to procure all the wild rice and Sugar he can collect and make up the Ladings of the Rainy River craft with those articles to York Factory." Likewise, Allan McDonnell, serving in the Swan River district, was "to procure all the Salt and Sugar and Provisions he can collect to be delivered at Norway House." In 1823, John Clarke of Swan River was "to employ his own men in making a certain quantity of sugar to be disposed of as may afterwards be deemed most advantageous."

The small quantity of refined sugar brought in by the Hudson's Bay Company commanded so high a price that it was used only for such state occasions as a wedding or a clergyman's call. Until 1860 and later, the sugar upon even festive tables at Red River was scraped maple sugar or the grainy type of crushed sugar, which, in the Red River dialect, was known as "crash" sugar. Apparently none of the Old Country families made their own sugar, but depended on being supplied by the French, the Métis or the Indians who every year tapped the Manitoba maple groves.

Usually the sap was caught in large troughs hollowed from tree trunks. Often the Indians used a well-scrubbed canoe, slung between two trees, about two feet above the ground, to pour sap in until it could be boiled. In many districts, particularly in the Lake Winnipeg area where almost all the islands were covered with Manitoba maples, the Hudson's Bay Company established large camps with paid labor. They introduced the brace and bit for tapping the trees, and iron spiles or "gouges." They also brought in huge iron kettles for boiling the sap.

In addition to the sugar and syrup made at their camps, the Company took in large quantities of maple products in trade. Rev. H. G. Gunn of Lockport, Manitoba, who saved from oblivion much information on the maple sugar industry, said that the Company handled many thousands of pounds of sugar in a year and exported to England what was not required in this country. Archbishop Matheson recalled seeing quantities of good-sized rogans being loaded into boats at Sugar Point for shipment to Upper Fort Garry. Others mentioned seeing fifty to sixty large rogans at a time piled in one corner in the Pigeon Lake Hudson's Bay Company store. Alfred Franks, for many years employed at Lower Fort Garry, said that a great deal of maple sugar was taken in every spring. Mrs. Mary Thomas of St. Peters told me she had sold her sugar to the Lower Fort for many years, until the shop was finally closed in 1911.

The trade was probably carried on at other posts, as far west as it was made. Archbishop Matheson recollected that when he was a boy at St. John's college, lads who hailed from Fort Ellice and Fort Pelly used to have parcels of maple sugar sent from their homes.

I once asked an old friend belonging to a Selkirk settlement family what was the greatest treat they used to have as children. She said that when spring came the family supply of bread was baked in an outdoor bake-oven, and that in May, after the bread was taken out of the oven, some flour was put in and browned. This browned flour, sprinkled well with new, scraped maple sugar, and eaten with milk was the children's greatest treat of the year.

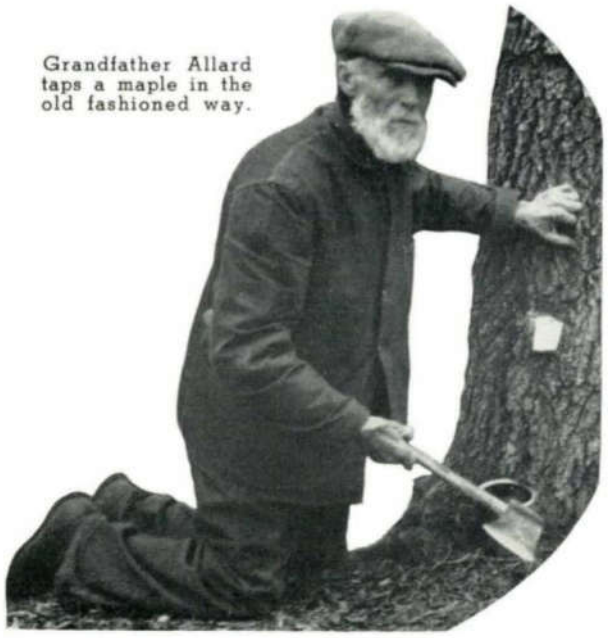
Although western sugar camps apparently did not have the planned merry-making such as the "sugaring off" parties of early Ontario days, they were places of much fun and enjoyment. The routine of family camps was always the same. The men helped in the exodus from home, conveyed the women and children, the equipment and provisions to the usual sugar preserve. After they had

tapped the trees, the men left their families to complete the sugar harvest. Even if the site was not far from home, a regular camp was always established for the duration of the season. The children gathered wood, kept fires under the black cauldrons, gathered the sap—willing workers at a sweet task which had its eventual rewards. Mr. Gunn said that sugar camps ranged from small single-family units producing from twenty to thirty pounds of sugar and some syrup, to larger ones with an output of a thousand pounds or more. One or two hundred pounds of sugar was an ordinary harvest for a camp of any size.

Certain families were accustomed each spring to make sugar at Cook's Creek, which flows into the east side of the lower Red. In the old days, there was a considerable stream with maple trees on the flats beside it. Each year people living at Lockport watched for the coming of a little procession that consisted of a woman, her husband, and a large sled on which was piled a birch bark canoe and the sugar-making equipment. The procession would cross the river on the ice to go to Cook's Creek. Later, the watchers would see the man returning alone across the ice, dragging his empty sled. About six weeks afterwards, the birch bark canoe would be seen coming up the river, the woman paddling home the products of her labour and the sugar-making equipment.

Since syrup was difficult to transport, sugar was the larger part of the maple harvest. The materials were gathered and prepared well in advance of the season. Indian women fashioned fine and varied birch bark baskets of various sizes and sometimes added patterns of quill-work to attract the buyer when they peddled their wares in the settlement. All the birch bark containers, large and small, were called *rogans*.*

Mrs. Joseph Dauphinais of Winnipeg, who was a Dejarlais, says that in the old buffalo days they used buffalo bladders as receptacles for sap, as well as rogans. The women made tremendous basins of buffalo hide into which the syrup was poured after boiling, and stirred with a wooden paddle until it sugared.



Grandfather Allard taps a maple in the old fashioned way.

Mrs. George Butler of Winnipeg has written out of her present day knowledge of the tapping of Manitoba maples on the western shore of Lake Winnipeg.

"On an April morning when there was still a wintry nip in the air I walked along paths in the maple bush. How strange it was to see the trees before me, and all around me, bristling with the wooden chips which the Indian women use for sap spiles. Their sap buckets were a varied lot. Some used well washed tomato cans. But mostly all used birch bark baskets, cleverly folded and laced together at the end with tender thread-thin roots, in the shape of tiny boats. I could almost believe I had stepped into the land of the pixies so quaint was the sight of those small vessels strewn far and wide at the foot of almost every maple. The only break in the hush of the woods was the sound of the drip, drip, drip of the colorless sap into those primitive vessels.

"Later when Martha Stagg brought me some of her sugar and syrup to sample I knew why the Indian women yearly attend to their sap gathering. Manitoba maple sugar and syrup has an indescribable delightful "woodsy" flavour which is not to be found in any other food."*

Mrs. Butler remarks that place names on a map often reveal many of the practices and occupations of the early settlers. The map of Manitoba shows how widely the sugar making was spread. "Sugar Island in Lake Winnipegosis tells its own tale for here a large bush of sugar maples still stand. Sugar Island and Sugar Point are prominent names in Lake Manitoba. To this day the native women near Sugar Island in Lake Waterhen are as regular as the yearly rise of the sap itself with their spring tapping, boiling and sugaring off. Saulteaux women produce a particularly fine grade of maple products at several points on Lake St. Martin."†

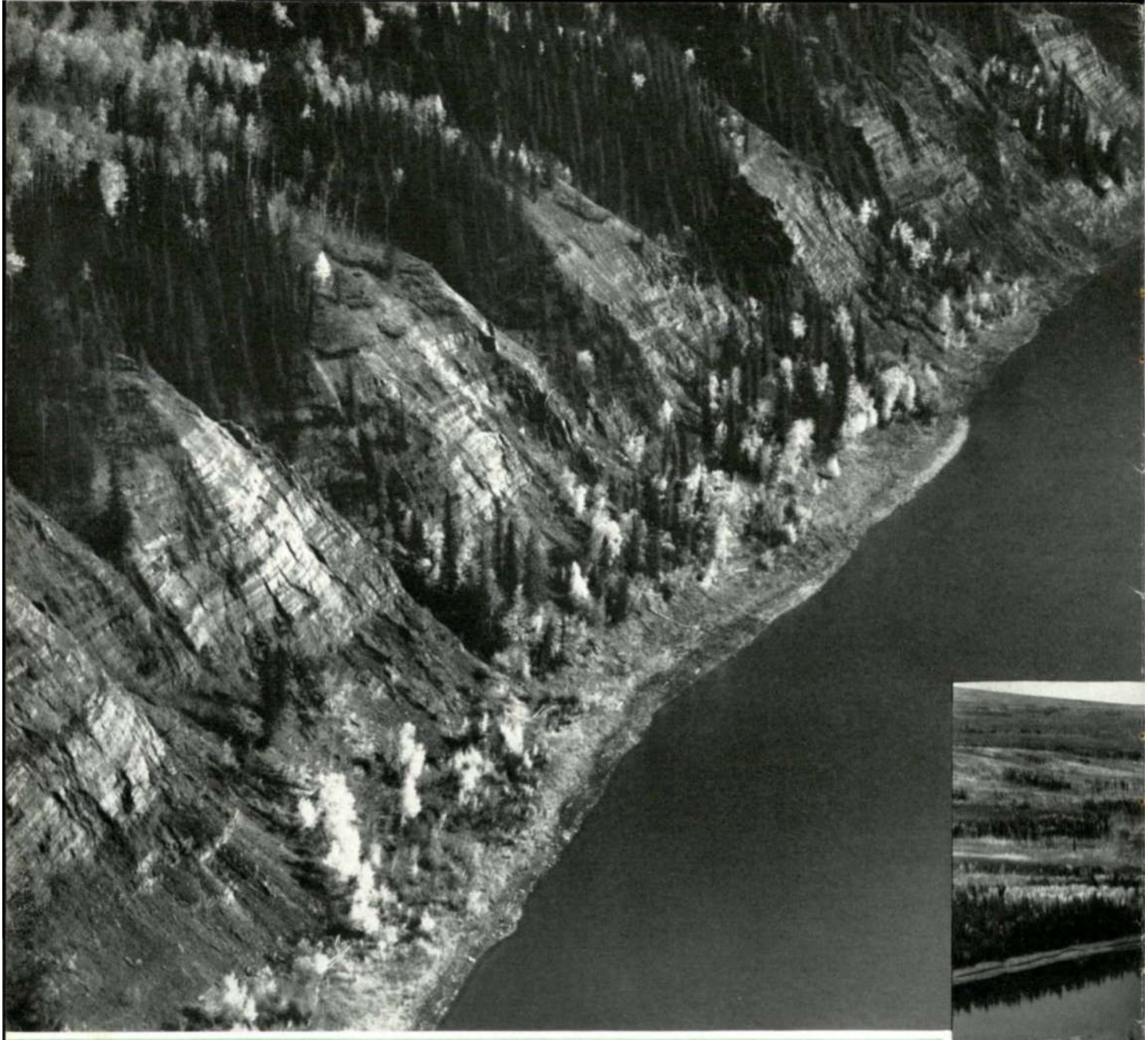
With the spread of settlement on the western prairies, sugar making declined. The boiling down of the sap was always a more laborious business in the west where the sugar content was lower than in the east. With the arrival of steamboats and then trains, it was easier and cheaper to purchase refined sugar brought in from the outside world. Maple trees were cut down and drainage ditches discouraged new growth.

Nevertheless, sugar making did not entirely cease. Until after Manitoba became a province, the Red Lake Indians annually paddled north with maple syrup, sugar and scraped sugar. Even in the '80s some Indians were privileged to come and make sugar on Selkirk settler farms in Kildonan, where they had always made it. Until 1888, one old Indian woman might be seen each year at the foot of McLeod Avenue in East Kildonan, collecting her sap and making sugar. Families at St. Peter's, Netley Creek, and near Amaranth on Lake Manitoba, as well as the Allards of Baie St. Paul, tap their trees every spring. A medical friend at Letellier, near Emerson, has his own use for maple sap. Each spring the drinking water develops a strange taste. He taps his fine avenues of maples and the family uses the sap for drinking water. He even uses the sap in the tea kettle instead of water and he says it makes a fine cup of tea.

Early this year, as of old, preparations for sugar making will begin. French-Canadian families beat a path in the snow to their stand of maples on the home farm. There the huge black cauldron for boiling sap hangs the year round and soon its brief reign of opulent sweetness begins. Crackling fires burn constantly beneath and bucket after bucket of sap is poured in, presently to boil and sputter with enticing aroma and promise of treats to come. ◆

*A common and evidently an ancient name. Marius Barbeau quotes the earliest entry on the account books of the Hotel Dieu in Quebec, dated 1693: "*80 livres de sucre et des petits houragans.*" This was an Algonkin-French word, meaning a kind of birchbark container, and it seems to have been shortened into *rogan*. In the Cree dictionary edited by Archdeacon Faries it is spelt "roggin," and is applied to "a flat birch-rind dish" as well as "a deep dish for pounded meat."

†*Forest and Outdoors*, March 1948.



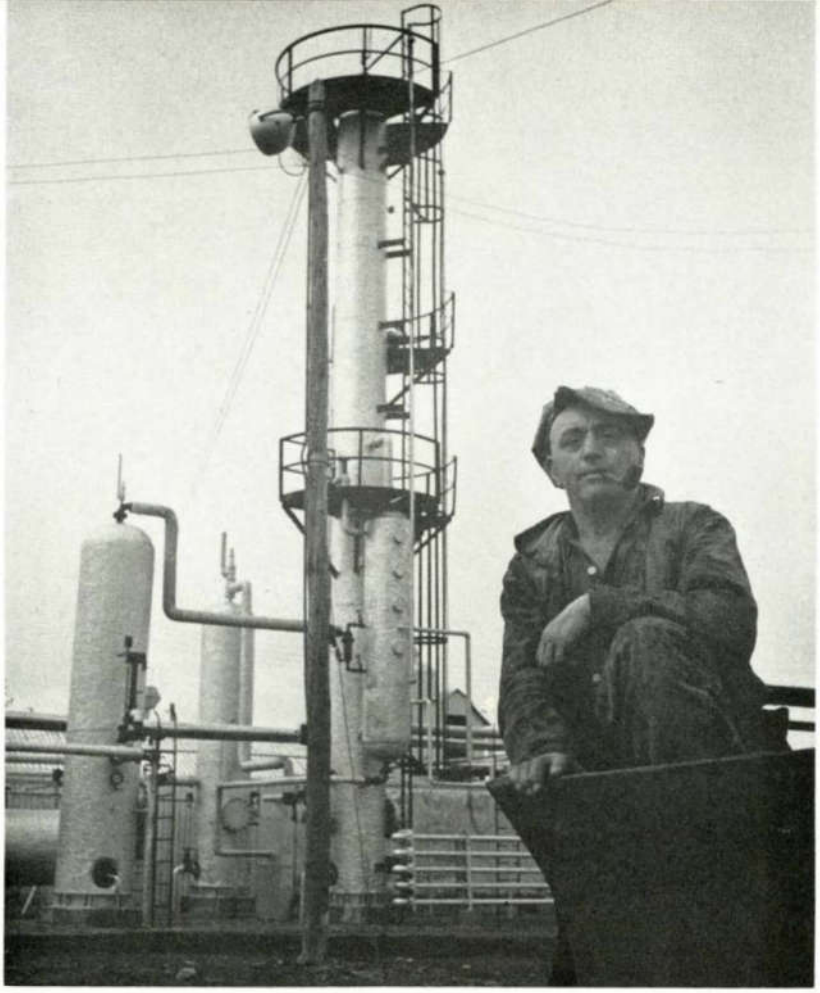
Tar sand banks along the Athabasca River a few miles below Fort McMurray, Alberta. This is believed to be the largest oil field in the world, but a profitable method of extracting the oil from the sand has not yet been found.

Photographs by George Hunter

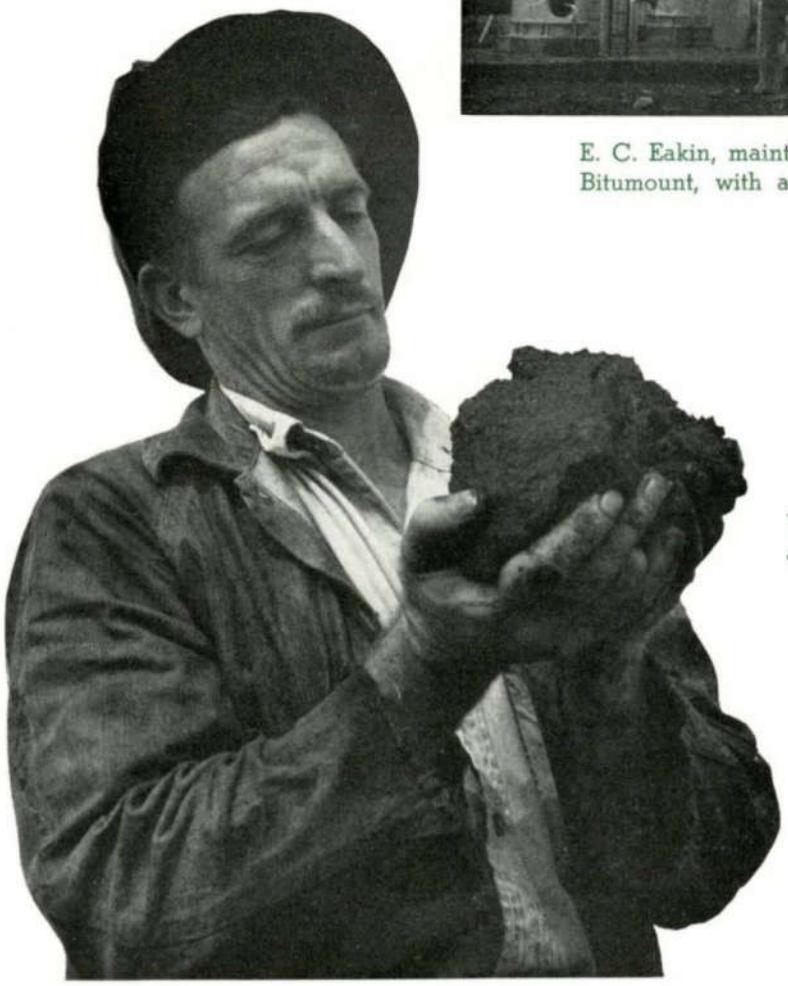
Mr. Hunter, a Canadian free lance photographer, is perhaps best known for his coloured aerial photos which have been featured in Time *magazine.*

ATHABASCA TAR SANDS

The provincial refinery at Bitumount on the Athabasca River, where experiments are made for removing oil from the tar sands.

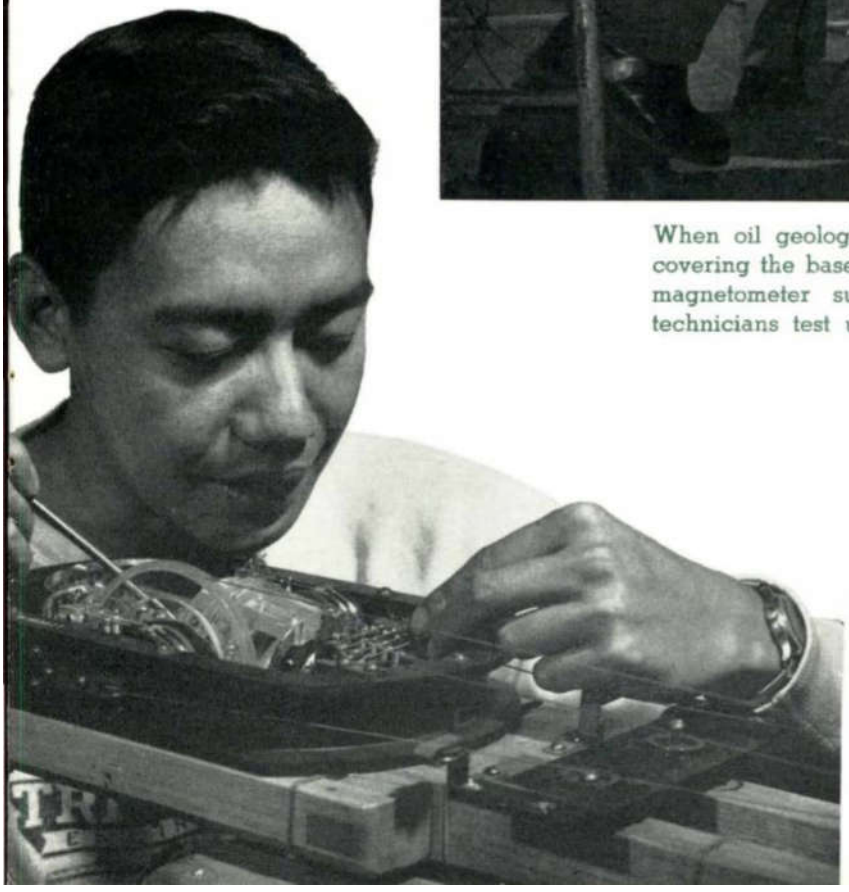


E. C. Eakin, maintenance man of the tar sands pilot plant at Bitumount, with a section of the plant in the background.



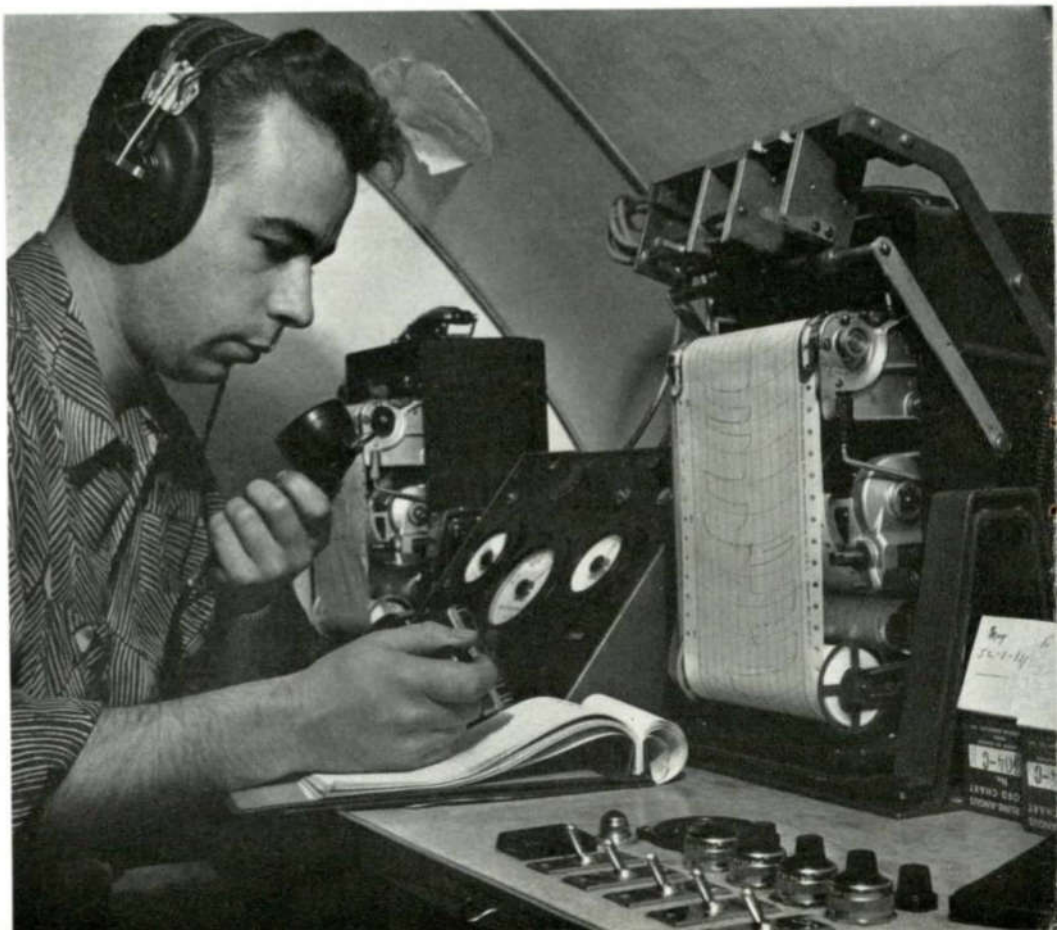
W. R. Willis examines a sample of the bituminous sands.

When oil geologists wanted information on the sediments covering the basement rock in the tar sands area, an aerial magnetometer survey was made. Here two electronic technicians test units of the apparatus at Fort McMurray.



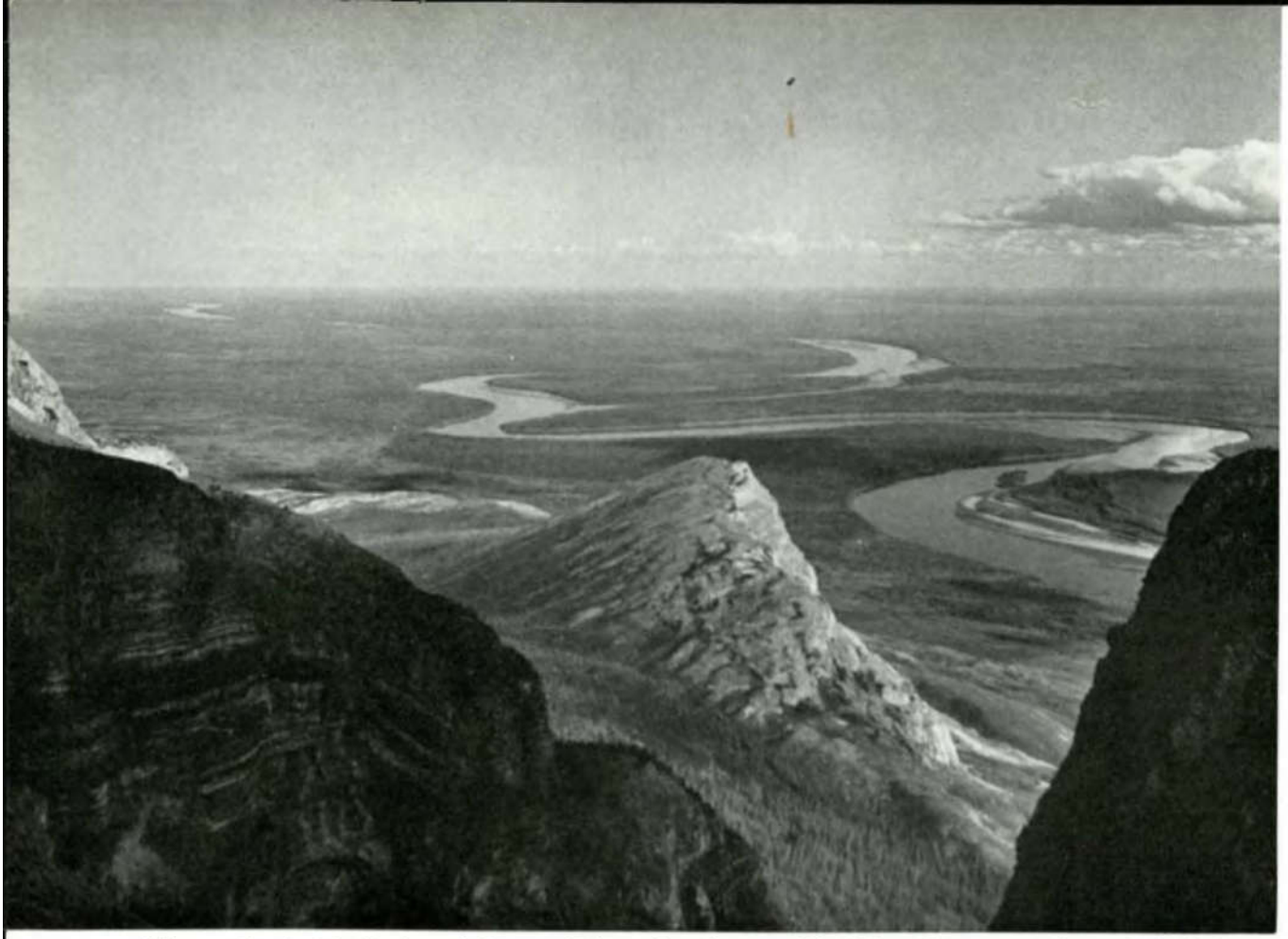
Tom Ling makes adjustments to the detector head of the magnetometer.

With the detector head fixed in the tail of the Canso amphibian behind them, a Geological Survey crew examine a map of the Fort McMurray area prior to taking off.



Inside the Canso, E. Ready operates the recording instruments. The one at the left registers the altitude, that on the right, the changing magnetic profile below the plane as it flies.

Ray Landry removes the detector head from the tail of the aircraft after the flight is over. 40,000 square miles around Fort McMurray was thus surveyed, two thirds of it over the Great Plains region, the rest over the Canadian Shield.



"The great bends of the Liard, crooked as a snake," seen from the crags of the Nahanni Butte as it winds towards the Mackenzie.

LIARD RIVER VOYAGE

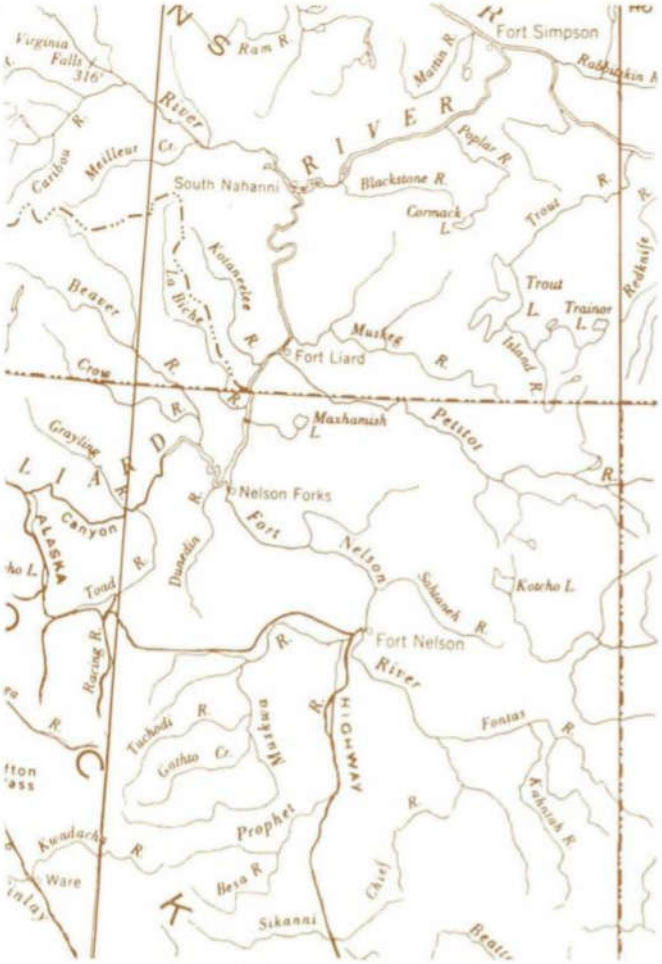
Story and Photos
by R. M. Patterson

As our plane approached Fort Nelson, rents in the storm clouds gave us a sight of the country below and of the winding knot of rivers that come together there. Things didn't look so very good. The August rains of 1954 had done a thorough job: every hollow was a pool and every trail a morass while, of the rivers, the Sikanni Chief and the Prophet were running yellow with mud: the Muskwa alone seemed to be more or less clear. At the airport the runways were still wet from the last downpour, and we—my cousin Christopher and myself—landed in a brief spell of watery sunshine wondering why, in this so-called summer, we had been foolish enough to leave our homes.

The usual delays then fell to our lot, caused mainly by the impossible layout of the place. Alaska Highway Fort Nelson is ten miles south-west from the airport and the boat landing is nearly two miles in the opposite direction. Between the landing and Old Fort Nelson flows the Fort Nelson River—and so the place is strung out over some thirteen miles, with the river obstacle thrown in for good measure, and with a full-fledged Hudson's Bay Company store operating at the highway end of the line and an old-time Hudson's Bay Company post at the other end, beyond the river. The various facilities are scattered all over the map and, one way and another, anything more inconvenient it would be hard to find. However, eventually we got going and slipped away down the river in a sudden blaze of evening sunshine—sunshine which flattered only to deceive for, by midnight, it was once more raining.

The Fort Nelson River was misbehaving itself in a most unusual manner—it was in flood and still rising, in August of all seasons. Great uprooted trees and drift of all kinds went sailing by. Clots of yellow froth covered the stream and in the eddies the mud seemed to boil as if in a cauldron. It was best not to wash, or at least to wash only very prudently, since washing in this stuff merely made one more dirty, while drinkable tea could only be made by taking water from some clear side-stream. The wind swung into the north-east and the rain drove down out of the low, racing clouds. Photography became a waste of time and film and, after two days of this sort of thing, we camped

Mr. Patterson, a frequent contributor to these pages, has travelled extensively by water in British Columbia and the country to the north of it. His book Dangerous River *has recently won an award from the Washington State Press Club.*



From Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys map.

in thick spruce opposite that old landmark of the voyageurs, Roche qui Trempe à l'Eau, and waited for the weather to clear. And one more day of rain went by . . . .

With the slow unveiling of the sun, colour flooded back into a rain-washed world and, with it, hope. At midday we loaded up and that afternoon, shortly after passing the abandoned post of Nelson Forks, we came to the Liard and turned upstream. The canoe we were using was a 20′ Chestnut "Ogilvy Special," 36″x13″, square-ended—and to drive it we had a 5½ h.p. Johnson "Seahorse" 1954. We had left Fort Nelson with two 10-gallon drums of gas and that, with the Johnson's tank, gave us a maximum of 23.3 gallons, by now somewhat reduced. We intended to make it upstream some seventy miles to Hell Gate on the Liard, in the foothills of the Rockies. With us we had R. G. McConnell's report on his descent of the Liard from the Lower Post in 1887 and the map he made on that trip, which, with its detailed information, is still, today, the best map of the Liard. What kind of water we should meet, however, we had little idea (it proved to be faster than we had expected), so, to conserve gas, we had come down most of the hundred miles of the Nelson with the paddle, and now we planned to track up the faster stretches wherever a good beach was available and to help the kicker along with paddle or pole if necessary. This system worked well and, since one's feet are usually wet when pushing a canoe upstream, it had the added advantage of keeping us limbered up and warm.

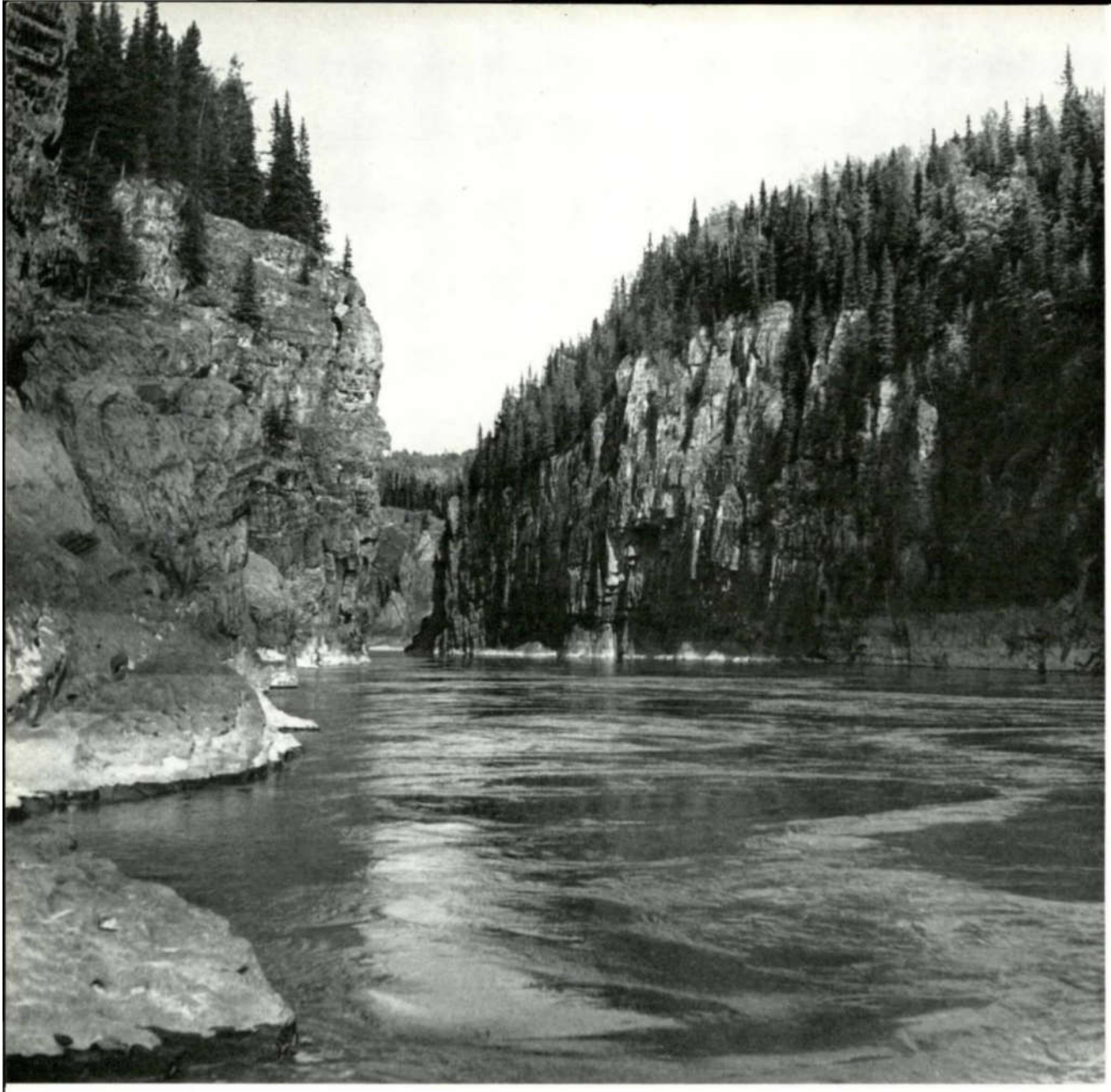
Somewhere in the far north and west, beyond the Rockies, the summer must have been a good one, for the Liard was running a faint silty green and a pail of its water was clear. Not only that, but the weather was perfect and it rained no more for nearly a month. Our troubles were over, all except one—we were overloaded, and when the kicker was running all out against fast water we had less than an inch of freeboard. So we cached some heavy stuff on an island and re-shuffled the load, and from then on all was well.

We worked our way up around the great bends where the Liard, crooked as a snake, races down through a maze of gravelly, wooded islands and sandbars and one wonders which way to turn for the best. Low plateaus stood back from the river, and there was one view to the north-west, of the stony summits of the Mackenzie Mountains. Then these vanished behind nearer hills and we came to the Beaver River and turned up it for a couple of days for the pleasure of travelling on a smaller stream. Its water was utterly clear and one longed for time to follow it for, far upstream and over several portages, there is a pass over the mountains that leads to the Meilleur River and to Deadmen's Valley on the Nahanni. An Indian's cabin and a well-built cache stood empty near the mouth of the Beaver: just above these and in a deep, quiet pool, we came on a black bear and two cubs swimming.

We went up the Liard, coping as best we might with the morning mists that are a feature of this river: they seem to come down about five or six a.m. on most mornings and can be so thick as to delay the start until ten or even eleven; so we travelled far into the evenings.

Extremely fast water soon gave place to a slacker current, and picturesque bluffs of sandstone and conglomerate rose sheer out of deep water on the southern shore. We came to a place where, for the first time, the mighty Liard is crowded together into one narrow stream between high cliffs: then we turned south into a long stretch of shale cutbanks and islands with swifter water than ever before—and the two of us marched up the beaches, hauling on the trackline as the voyageurs of the Company used to do when the Liard was the only known route to the Cassiar country and the Yukon. That evening we camped in warm, dry spruce above a boulder beach and, under those trees, I was amazed to find one single, lonely plant of devil's club, that curse of the Selkirks and the Coast Range. I believe this is the first occasion on which it has been reported east of the Rockies.

Next day, towards midday, we hauled the canoe up a very strong riffle which, we learned later, was Starke's Riffle, named after my old Klondiker friend of Nahanni days, Jack Starke. At the head of the riffle the Scatter River came in and, in the bush below its lowest mouth, we saw a neatly painted sign—"No Admittance"—so, we landed. It was an abandoned prospecting camp of a season or two ago: the site was well cleared and a table for about eight and a cookstove still stood forlornly under the trees. A well-beaten trail ran to another site a little way off and there, nailed to a tree was a second paint-



Hell Gate on the Liard, looking downstream

ed board—"Office. 56 Church St.," it said. So *that* was it—and a sudden vision came to us of bustling, hurrying men from a certain righteous eastern city, clad in gnome-like suits of sober hue and wearing on their heads those bowler hats which invariably provoke the West to mirth. Rackham, perhaps, could have caught this vision and set it on his canvas, with the amazed trees looking down. We elaborated on this theme and then, reduced to laughter, we withdrew from the sacred grove and boiled our profane tea pail on the far side of Scatter River.

That night we camped opposite Lepine Creek, named for W. Lepine whom McConnell met in 1887 making his way up the Liard with a crew of Hudson's Bay Company voyageurs towards the Dease. "Lepine," writes McConnell, "had been employed on the river as a guide, in the old days when goods were taken by this route to the Yukon . . . [he] had become disheartened by the continued high water and the difficulties of up-stream navigation, and when we met him talked of returning, but we induced him to persevere."

From that camp it was only a short distance to the site of old Toad River Post, a couple of miles below the mouth of Toad River. The site is on the north shore in the lee of a great cape of sandstone and shale. The buildings were still standing when McConnell passed by, though they had already been abandoned by the Company sometime previously. Shoving through the jungle-like growth on the site I could find no trace of them—only, here and there in the ground, faint signs of excavations.

Five miles upstream we made camp where the clear, blue water of the Grayling falls into the Liard's green, and from our landing place we had the first close view of the northern Rockies—bare, brown summits against the cloudless evening sky.

Late on the following day, with several small canyons behind us, we came to the foot of a strong riffle where the Liard swept at speed round a big island. Up it we went, the kicker running all out, climbing slowly the hill of racing water. At the head of the riffle, with tall cliffs on the right and a gravel beach with cliffs beyond it on the left, the current slackened; I cut the engine to a gentle hum and the canoe crept forward into a rock-walled mountain lake. I stared at my cousin and he stared at me. "My God," he said, "where's the Liard gone?"

I cut the engine out and in dead silence we drifted towards the right-hand shore. There was no sound of water ahead—all we could hear was the fading roar of the riffle we had left behind. Ahead of us was an obvious camping place and we paddled towards it and threw the stuff out on to the beach: then we stood by the water's edge and looked and listened—but no sound came from this lake of, perhaps, eighty acres. It was evening now and the sun was shut off from this basin by the wooded hills and there were no shadows thrown: there was nothing to be seen that might indicate current except the faintest of lines down the centre of the water. Quietly we got into the canoe and paddled away along the rocky shore. Supper could wait till we had found which way the river went . . . .

Hell Gate is a narrow channel, with sheer walls, cut through an anticlinal ridge of limestone which crosses the river's path. On the left shore an older channel, also vertical-sided, is now abandoned except at high water—the two canyons thus making an island between them of water-worn rock, crowned with trees. The main channel of the Gate must be enormously deep: a strong riffle at its head caused the whole length of the Gate to be agitated by strong eddies and boils which, as we drifted past in the canoe, could be seen to rise and burst on the surface with considerable force, driving the water against the canyon walls. With care the Gate was passable for a canoe, but this was the end of the trail for us—we had an appointment with Nahanni Butte, some 240 miles down river. And there was Faille* to find, and the Lower Rapids, close to Fort Simpson, to be photographed—there was no time to travel on by canoe into the canyon country. Instead, we would see all we could on foot.

We camped there, by the lagoon, for two days and three nights. The late afternoon of the second day found us some four miles up the Liard, at the foot of the next canyon. Rarely have I seen so beautiful a sight as this was at that hour. We lay among the dwarf spruce on a sun-warmed ledge high above the river, peering down into the canyon. Right out of the sun the Liard came. At the head of the gorge the tossing waves of a riffle flashed in the sunlight—they seemed to surge across the river and vanish into some rocky basin that we could not see. In the canyon itself, between its plunging walls, the boils and eddies writhed and twisted like silver snakes on the surface of the green water. Far ahead, the profile of a peaked and broad-shouldered mountain heaved up, outlined in the golden haze. It was a river idealized—a calendar picture of some artist's dream; but, this time, it was a dream come true.

With the warm smell of spruce and fir there came to us, now and then, the gentle splash of an eddy as it filled and spilled over, or the bubbling rush of some boil breaking on the surface. But that was all—no breeze was stirring on this hot September afternoon.

Through this canyon that lay below us there had passed many an expedition of the eighteen thirties and eighteen forties, sent out by the Hudson's Bay Company from Fort Simpson to explore the lands "beyond the Mountain." John McLeod had come this way, headed for Dease Lake and Terror Bridge on the Tooya River, and Robert Campbell, bound for Campbell's Portage and the Pelly. They passed not only once but many times and at all seasons, and Dr. G. M. Dawson writes of them: "Less resolute men would scarcely have entertained the idea of utilizing, as an avenue of trade, a river so perilous of navigation as the Liard had proved to be when explored. So long, however, as this appeared to be the most practicable route to the country beyond the mountains its abandonment was not even contemplated. Neither distance nor danger appear to have been taken into account . . . ."

A minor tragedy marred our departure from Hell Gate. The Bay at Fort Nelson had not been too certain of the eggs that they had sold to us—so, warning us of this, they had supplied an extra dozen free of charge. My cousin, egg expert to the expedition, had therefore broken each one separately into a cup but, so far, only one had been bad. That made an odd number, and now there was only one egg left for breakfast: we eyed it hungrily and then tossed for it, and I won. Christopher broke the egg into a mug, recoiling slightly as he did so. Then he handed the mug to me with a grin spreading over his face—and I think that egg was more rotten, almost, than any egg has ever been. There is no moral that I can see to this story—it merely points the infallibility of the Great Company. If they tell you there are rotten eggs about, then rotten eggs there will be and, as Long John Silver said, "you may lay to that."

On the way down we picked up our cached stuff at the island and dumped it again at the mouth of the Nelson. There we had the good fortune to fall in with Dick Turner of the Netla River on his way down from Fort Nelson. "Throw your canoe on to my boat," he said, "and travel with me. You'll make better time." So we did that—and we tied up when darkness fell, at François'. We sat late in the little cabin that night, listening to the gossip of the river from the Mackenzie to the Sikanni Chief, and the talk soon turned on Faille. This time there was no hope, Turner said. It was over two years now since he had disappeared into his old hunting grounds in the Nahanni country, and no man, white or Indian, had set eyes on him since then. Even though he had done that sort of thing before—which he often had—that didn't mean he could go on doing it for ever. No—a man gets old and then he makes

* See the *Beaver*, June 1952, pp. 14-15.

a mistake, or the luck runs out . . . and we sat around the cabin table for a while in silence, thinking of the man, who in all likelihood, had been.

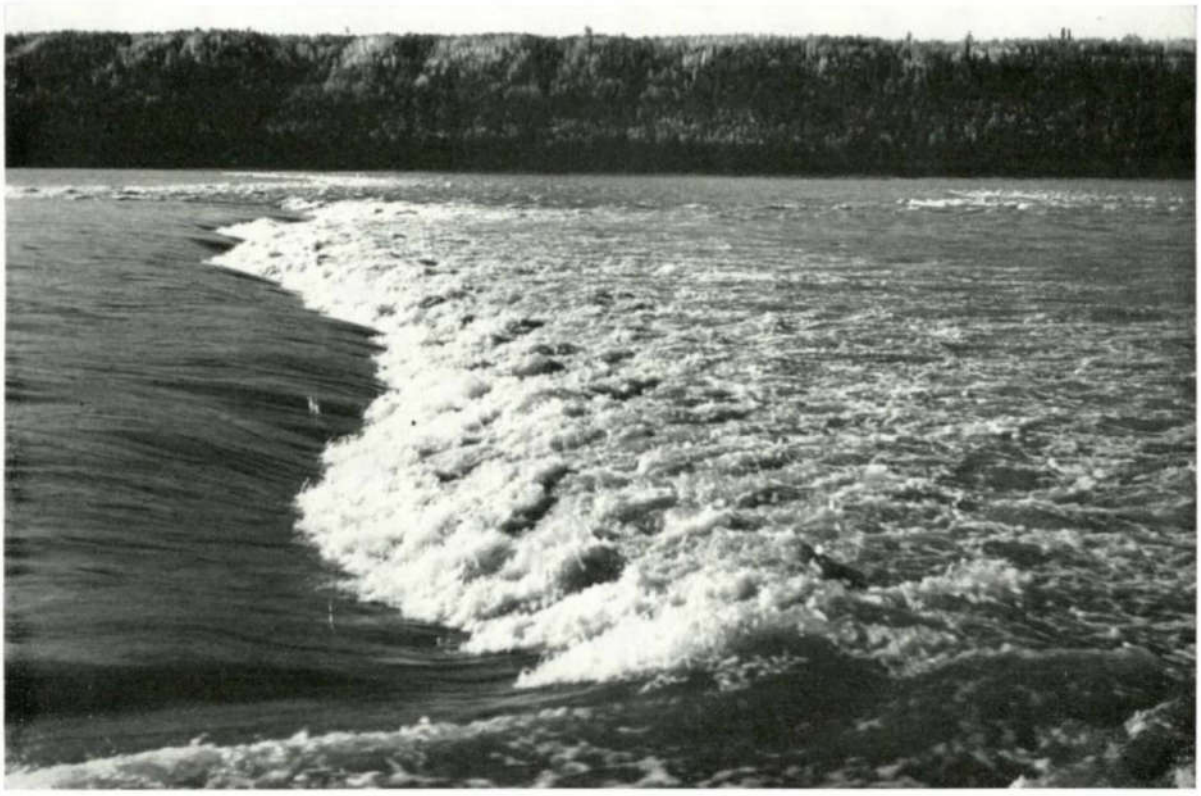
We came next evening to Dick Turner's trading post at the Netla River, fifteen miles above the mouth of the South Nahanni; and the first piece of news there, after the greetings were over, was that Albert Faille had been seen, alive and cheerful as ever, paddling down the Liard towards Fort Simpson. He was evidently out of gas, and when hailed across the water and asked what had fetched him down from his mountains he had shouted back "Out of matches!" —as well he might be after twenty-six months; but, even so, that light-hearted reply was thought to conceal some deeper purpose.

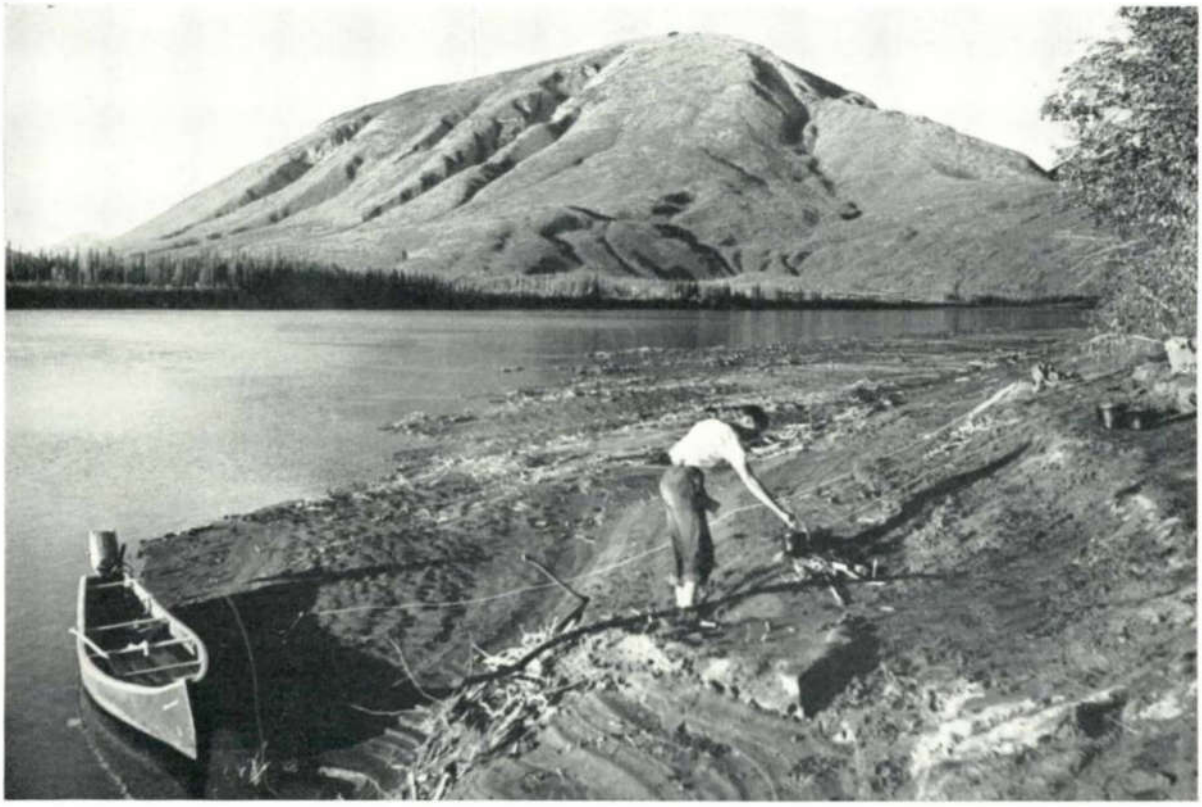
Dick Turner had to make a flying trip to Fort Simpson and, knowing that I wanted to see Faille, he very kindly asked us to go with him—we could leave the canoe and outfit, he said, at the new post he was building at South Nahanni, close under the Butte. We could make the 110 miles in one day and get back in something under two, and that was a lot better than we could do with a canoe and outboard.

This was a godsend, and it is to this that we owe our pictures of the Lower Rapids of the Liard, taken from the middle of the river where we could never have ventured with a canoe. I had passed up and down these rapids in May and in July when they are buried deep by high water and nothing shows but a series of powerful swells—and I had tramped over them on snowshoes in February when nothing shows at all. But this was September when the bones of rivers show: now we would see what all the fuss was about. R. G. McConnell, incidentally, refers to the Lower Rapids as merely "a series of strong riffles near the mouth of the Liard"—much to the indignation of the rivermen of today who cannot pass to and fro with their boats, through Shallow Bay and Driftwood Bay and over the reefs, as easily as the canoemen of seventy years ago could slip through the canoe channel along the right shore—portaging their outfits if the need arose, and lining down the empty canoes, which would ride high and light like autumn leaves on the surface of the water. McConnell, however, had just come down through the canyons of the Upper Liard and that, no doubt, tended to dwarf the Lower Rapids in his eyes.

Cape Island, between Birch River and Poplar River and over half way to Simpson from South Nahanni, is the landmark for trouble, with a little fast water there: the rapids proper begin some seven miles lower down, with the mountains of the Nahanni Range fading from view for the last time at Poplar River. Turner piloted his boat, the "Come Later," with skill and the knowledge born of experience-through the eight to ten miles of white and broken water, swinging from side to centre and back again, following the, deepest channel. The most spectacular chute is that of the Beaver Dam—a creaming line of white stretched across the Liard, which is here some three quarters of a mile wide. The

"The Beaver Dam sprang out across the river, to be lost from view as it neared the further shore."





Nahanni Butte from the west. Christopher is seen boiling the tea pail on the shore of the South Nahanni, some four miles from its mouth.

boat channel in the Beaver Dam reef is about a quarter of the way out from the left shore. The river is continually changing here, and not for the better. The present passage through the reef opened about 1942 and, shortly afterwards, the canoe channel on the right bank became more difficult. We slipped easily down through the foaming water only to turn and head upstream again in mid-river till the the bow of the boat was almost touching the reef: here, in 1951, two men out of three in a canoe were drowned trying to run straight up and over the Beaver Dam. We got our pictures, and then we dropped back and swung in to the eastern shore where we tied up, walking back upstream to the rapid. The sun blazed down out of a cloudless sky and the rocks were warm to the touch. Blue and white—the sliding rush of unbroken, falling water and the boiling cauldron at the foot of the slide—the Beaver Dam sprang out across the river, to be lost from view as it neared the farther shore. One could see low cliffs over there and, above them, groups of poplars that were already turning to their autumn gold . . . .

Faille was at Fort Simpson and I found him there, early the next morning, sitting in his boat by the Mackenzie shore, tinkering with his outboard. A cold wind was blowing straight out of the rising sun, ruffling the surface of the mile-wide river. We talked over plans for the coming year and he told me where he would winter—he would be alone, he said, at the cabin that I knew, away back in the mountains of the Yukon divide.

"Take care of yourself," I said. "Remember, we're not so young as we were when we first hit the Nahanni."

"No," he replied. "But you look pretty lively still and, Patterson, I don't aim to cash in yet. The main trouble is, we're not so quick as we were then—and that's what counts on a river."

A few days later I sat on the grass and the dead herbage of the summer's flowers, high up on Nahanni Butte. Here and there in the warm autumn sunshine the crocuses were blooming again, thinking it was spring: thunderstorms were creeping out of the mountains to the westward: they were still far distant and the sunlight poured down between them, stalking over the enormous country in shafts and pillars of gold. At the foot of the Butte the Liard and the South Nahanni wound and twisted in great loops and oxbows: then they met and flowed away together into the flatlands towards the Mackenzie. To the south-east there was nothing, only the forested plain, but to the north-west could be seen the Twisted Mountain—one could almost lean forward and touch its russet slopes—and then the shining channels of the Nahanni until they vanished behind the Outpost Hills. Away beyond those hills I could see, bronze-coloured and glowing in the autumn sunlight, the sheep plateaus that rise above the Lower Canyon and, still further, the mountain masses of the Tlogo-tsho, shadowy and indistinct in the thickening haze—ghosts of mountains peopled with old and almost forgotten ghosts.

Many a winter has come and gone since a McLeod set out from Fort Simpson with his men to go to the "Nahanni lands." He made two trips and on one of these, according to the Hudson's Bay Company records, he and his party went only a short distance up the South Nahanni by canoe. Then they cached their canoes—it was flood time, so one can well understand why they did that—and went on, on foot. They "passed over nine ranges of mountains to a land in which there were no ranges, just detached mountains . . ." This can only have been the big, level alpine plateaus between the heads of the Ross and Gravel Rivers—the country over which the Canol pipeline was laid during the last war. They had followed the Nahanni to its head and then gone on beyond—and still they had met with no Indians. However, they made contact with the Nahannis on their way back, "between the second and third ranges, counting from Fort Simpson," and so this long and arduous journey was justified. These trips were made by John M. McLeod in 1823 and in 1824.

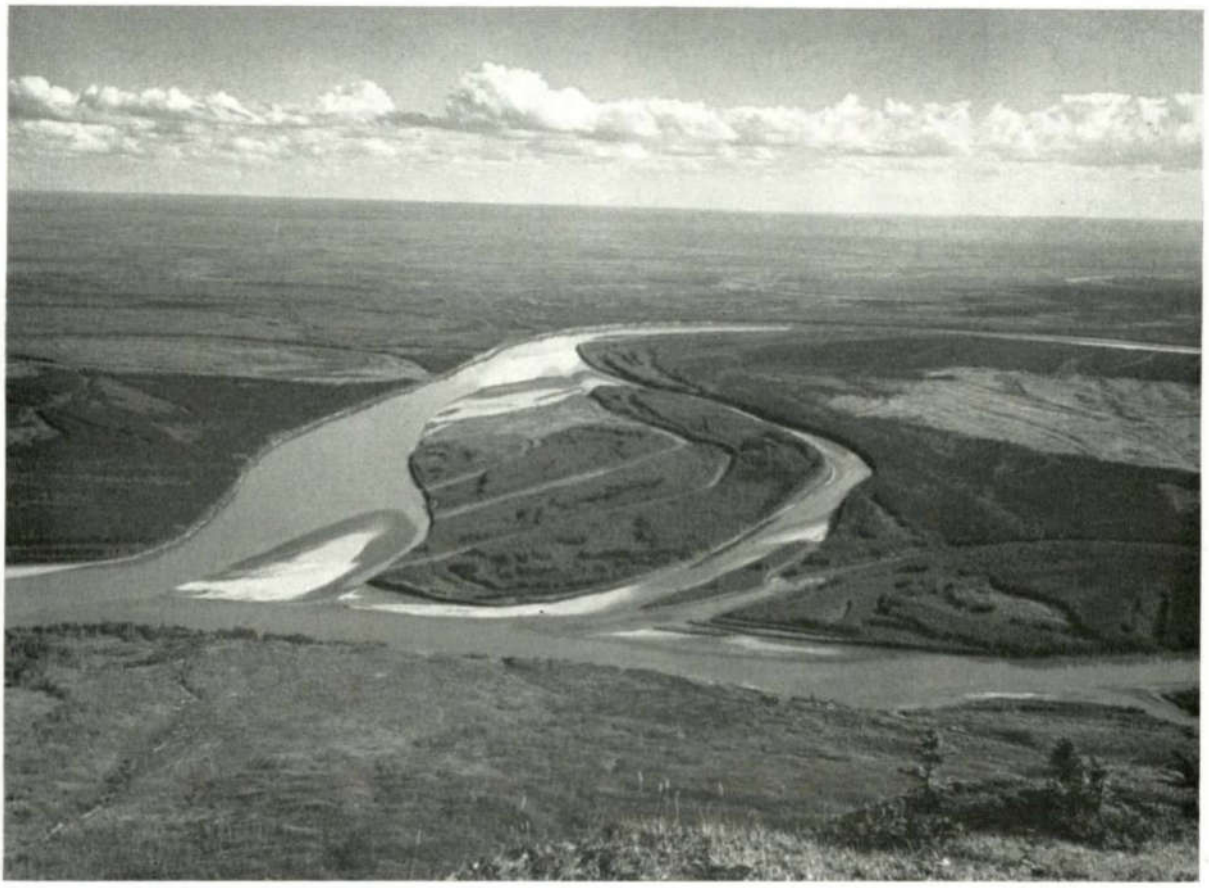
All this happened so long ago that even the memory of these journeys faded, and in Ottawa—when Ottawa came to be—they knew them not, despite the fact that they are recorded in a published book of Canadian history.* "Untravelled country" they called the South Nahanni, back east there in the holy of holies, and they retailed, to those seeking information, hair-raising rumours of the perils of that river—with the result that more than one would-be explorer deluded himself into the belief that he was "the first white man." But George Simpson's men had been ahead of these late comers by over a hundred years, travelling in the interest of the Company. It would be an act of grace to place John McLeod's name, even so late in the day, in a commanding position on the map of the Nahanni country . . . .

That evening the thunderstorms broke, and in the morning when we turned the canoe's nose up the Liard, the wind was in the north with a cold rain falling and big waves rolling up the river. On and off it rained for two days of varied travel and delay and then, on the third day, the sun blazed forth once more out of a tranquil sky. From our noonday fire I looked back down a long, blue reach of the Liard: in the far distance and cut off from all the nearer mountains there was something that caught the eye: it was low down on the horizon and it might almost have been a cloud—only there were no clouds on that splendid day.

It was Nahanni Butte—and it was faint and indefinite of outline because, on its upper slopes where we had climbed, there now lay a covering of freshly fallen snow. Round the next bend I looked back once more, but that had been the last of it—the trees were in the way now and the Butte was no longer to be seen. ◆

A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71 by A. S. Morton. Toronto, 1939. pp. 705-6.

Meeting of the Liard with the South Nahanni, from Nahanni Butte. Note the clear stream of the Nahanni (foreground) cutting in under the brown Liard water.



An old painting of the "Parthia" done shortly after she entered service in the London-New York passenger trade, 1871.

"PARTHIA" of the PACIFIC

The first vessel to fly the C.P.R. house flag saw service in the Yukon gold rush and the Aleutian campaign, and still plies the waters of the Pacific.

by Jim Faber

FOR days the panelled chambers of the London conference had buzzed with the subject of mounting East-West tensions. Now the delegates had arrived at a general agreement. Russia's growing military influence in the Orient must be contained.

The year was 1887. Across the vastness that was Russia, a rail line was being forged to link Moscow with the big naval base at Vladivostok. A year previously, the Canadian Pacific railroad had clawed its way across another continent to meet tidewater at Vancouver. Between the two continents lay the Pacific, a military vacuum waiting to be filled by sea power.

To the Colonial Conference holding its first meeting in London the danger was clear and apparent, the answer plain. Russia's new Trans-Siberian railroad not only would permit an attack on India through Afghanistan, but it mounted a threat to British possessions in the Pacific.

When the conference ended, the vacuum had been filled as the last gap in Britain's world-girdling lines of communications was closed. The conference had granted the Canadian Pacific Railway a subsidy of £60,000 a year to link Vancouver with the Orient by first class steamships "suitable for service as armed cruisers."

Mr. Faber, of the Associated Press in the State of Washington, served on the Victoria *in 1935. He has been covering Pacific Coast news events for more than 15 years.*

So it was that at Vancouver that same year a rakish, flush-decked steamer butted her way out of Burrard Inlet, pennants flying and China-bound. She was the *Parthia*, the first ship in a Canadian Pacific ocean fleet that within four decades was to span the world with more than fifty vessels.

Today, almost seventy years later, the *Parthia* has returned home to Vancouver. There is little in the appearance of the 320-foot craft to recall the proud ship that first carried Britain's challenge across the Pacific. Only the hull, built 84 years ago on the Clyde, remains unchanged.

During the life span of the *Parthia* (renamed the *Victoria* 62 years ago) the venerable ship has passed from sailing ship to passenger steamer to freighter—and today to a fuel barge.

Her decks have rung with the songs of pith-helmeted British troops headed for the campaign against Khartoum. Generations later, they echoed the tread of U.S. soldiers who turned back the Japanese in the Aleutians. Her holds have held silks and spices, reindeer carcasses and army mules, South Sea trade goods and millions in Klondike gold. Her wake has criss-crossed the course of empire, from the Victorian era to the atomic age.

When the *Parthia* sailed out of Vancouver for Yokohama in 1887, she already had written the first chapters in a long and fabled career. Launched in 1870 at Dun-

Nicknamed the "gold ship," "Parthia" as "Victoria" did yeoman service in the Klondike gold rush and for years afterwards. Here she leaves Seattle with 1200 gold-seekers aboard.

barton-on-the-Clyde by those masters of Scotch shipbuilding, W. Denny & Co., she took her place as one of the crack ocean liners of that day.

Above the schooner-rigged three masts snapped the lion rampant and globe, the house flag of the Cunard line. Below decks, her luxurious saloons echoed with the laughter of actresses and industrialists, peers and promoters, and with the sombre talk of French blue bloods fleeing the Paris Commune. Toasts were raised to Queen Victoria and President Grant, and after dinner, the men were given a look at a new mechanical marvel, a compound engine with a shaft that could be disconnected, allowing the propeller to idle when the wind was good.

For a decade the wind held good for the *Parthia*. She seldom missed a schedule, even in 1879, when she swung off course to rescue survivors of the *Jeannette*-De Long polar expedition, whose ship had been caught in the ice 700 miles off the Lena river. (A half century later, the indomitable ship was to carry two other explorers back to civilization. They were Roald Amundsen and Umberto Nobile, who had just crossed the North Pole by dirigible.)

The *Parthia* received her first taste of war in 1881, nosing her way to the edge of the Nubian Desert with General "Chinese" Gordon and his Egyptian campaign troops. When the war was over, the *Parthia* returned to Scotland for new engines and a re-designed superstructure. Under the colours of the Guion Line she headed southward, carrying settlers from England to the new frontiers in Australia and poking around waters from South America to Sumatra. Then to Vancouver, and a tumultuous welcome as the first C.P.R. liner.

It was on the run between Vancouver and the Orient that the *Parthia* got her name as "the lucky ship," a monicker that followed her through the Klondike gold rush days. The *Parthia's* team mates, the *Batavia* and the *Abyssinia*, ended their service abruptly, the *Abyssinia* burning at sea and the *Batavia* being captured attempting to run the blockade during the Russo-Japanese War. But the *Parthia* sailed on undisturbed for a decade.

Then two new foes—age and progress—altered her course. Sir William Van Horne of the C.P.R., was a lover of luxury and speed, and he sniffed at the *Parthia's* lumbering 12 knots. In 1891, fickle Vancouver waterfront habitués whistled up the arrival of the *Parthia's* replacement, the *Empress of India*, soon to crack trans-Pacific records with a steady 17½-knot speed.

The *Parthia's* triple-expansion engine, built by John Elder Co. in Glasgow, proved no match for those of the speedy Empress liners that replaced her, and she was returned to England. Then after an overhaul in 1893 she was renamed the *Victoria*, and once more was Pacific-bound, this time to take up her most menial role. The ship

that had been the toast of Atlantic and Pacific was relegated to carrying troops and mules to Spanish-American war campaigns in the Philippines. At that low ebb in the *Victoria's* career, the scrap heap beckoned.

It was the Klondike gold rush that swung her course away from near oblivion and set her on a compass bearing she was to follow faithfully for the next 45 years—North.

Her luxury accommodations were ripped out, the superstructure enlarged. In 1900, the *Victoria* headed north with 1,200 Klondikers aboard. She returned with two million dollars in gold. Her fame as the "Gold Ship" was made.

Now the narrow holds that had been roundly cussed from Liverpool to Sydney became assets. To prevent any post-season "prospecting" the hatch boards were removed from a hold directly under the bridge. The gold, in strong boxes, was stowed in the hold 'tween decks. A light was rigged, and an armed guard paced the bridge night and day. No prospector ever lost an ounce of gold on the *Parthia* unless it was in the round-the-clock poker games in the saloon, or in the high-rolling dice games in steerage.

Ownership of the *Victoria* in 1903 passed to the Northwestern Steamship lines, and five years later she ran up the house flag she was to carry for 44 years, that of the Alaska Steamship Company.

For more than 30 of those years, the tough little steamer plied the rough and bitter passage to Nome. Each spring her high pitched whistle broke the cold stillness of the Nome roadstead, signifying that the harbour, ice-locked since fall, once more was open for business. In the fall, the last departure of the *Victoria* heralded the return of the ice pack. Once, in 1934, the ship was delayed by the tedious loading of reindeer carcasses from barges. The *Victoria* overstayed her leave. Skidding temperatures and an arctic gale drove the ice floes southward. The *Victoria* was trapped.

In 1940, after nearly 70 years of roving the seven seas as a passenger vessel and troopship, the "Victoria" was towed to a Seattle marine yard for conversion into a freighter.

The ship's made-in-1870 iron plates shrugged off the ice with the same disdain they accorded China Sea typhoons and North Atlantic hurricanes. The only damage suffered was to the *Victoria's* pride, for she underwent the humiliation of being escorted out of the ice fields by her old rival, the U.S. cutter, *Bear*. She outlived this humiliation, however, by outliving the *Bear*.

The strength of those Swedish iron plates received another test when in 1907 the *Victoria* hit an iceberg and put into drydock for repairs. Several bow plates were bent by the collision, and replacements were ordered. The order wasn't filled. As a ship's officer explained:

"We just straightened out the old plates. The plates they make today aren't fit to use as patches on that old hull."

The Alaska Line kept the venerable ship on the Nome run for 30 years. Among a thousand-odd Nome residents, few ever came "outside" or made the return journey on any other ship than the "Old Vic." Her chief steward, W. C. Hubbard, boasted that out of 500 passengers aboard at any given time, there would be less than a dozen he couldn't call by first name.

Too slow for the Orient run, the *Victoria's* Scottish-built engines left her Alaska sisters wallowing in her wake during many a voyage. Challenged to a race by her old rival, the S.S. *Senator* in 1909, the *Victoria* obliged. The "Old Vic" left Nome 24 hours after the *Senator's* departure, bucked a storm for a week, and ended up a winner, docking a full day ahead of the *Senator*.

Remodelled into a freighter during World War II, the *Victoria* resumed the role first played during General Gordon's Egyptian campaign, carrying troops and material to the Aleutians. For seven years after the war, she was a familiar sight at Nanaimo, Prince Rupert and Alaska ports. Along the Seattle and Vancouver waterfronts, salts predicted that the "Old Vic" would sail on forever.

Then dwindling revenues, cut sharply by the rise of barge and air freight transportation, spelled out the *Victoria's* final run.

Wrecking bars and torches stripped her of her masts, superstructure, funnel and engines. Reduced to the bare hull, the *Victoria* for a few days was the *Parthia*, lying in her Clyde yards, awaiting completion. Then fuel tanks were lowered into the 84-year-old hull. The *Parthia* that sailed out of Vancouver harbor in 1887 to the salutes of the waterfront returned as a barge waddling behind a tug.

Today as the barge heads out under the Lions Gate bridge, she occasionally catches the wake of crack C.P.R. ships headed for Victoria, Nanaimo and Alaska. Then her bow seems to lift a little, tugging fretfully on the tow line, as if she remembers the glory that was hers. ◆

ST. LAWRENCE

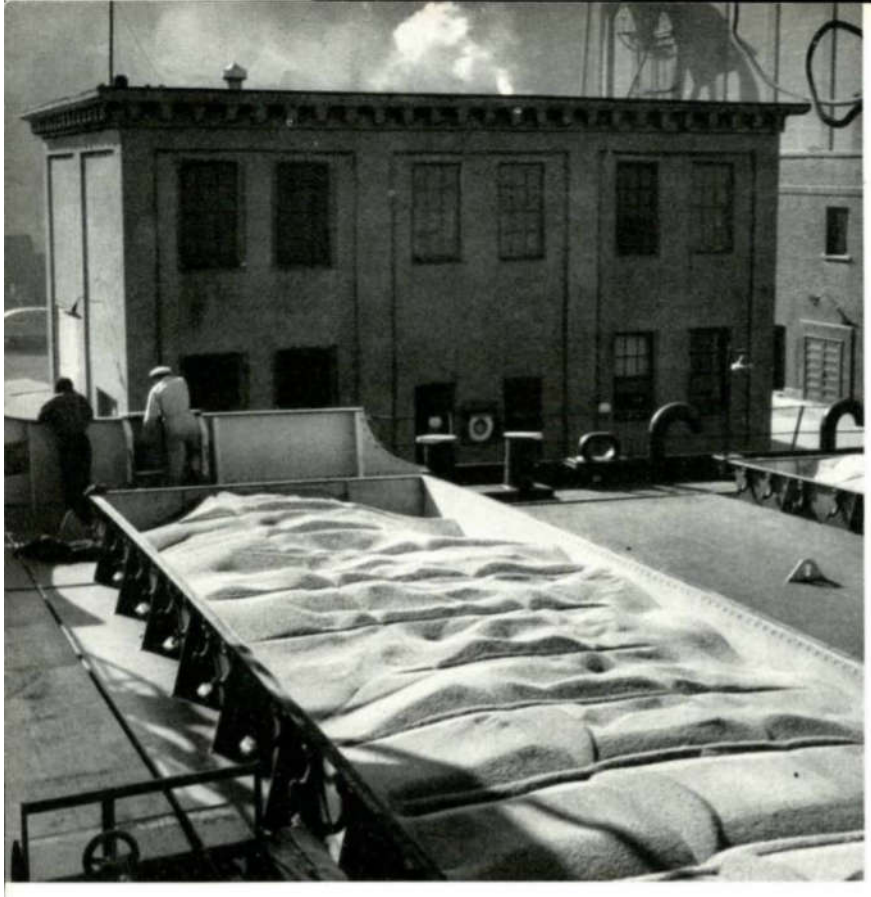
THIS IS THE THIRD GROUP OF MISS GILLIAT'S REMARKABLE STUDIES OF SHIPS AND PEOPLE ALONG THE HISTORIC WATERWAY OF THE ST. LAWRENCE AND GREAT LAKES.

by

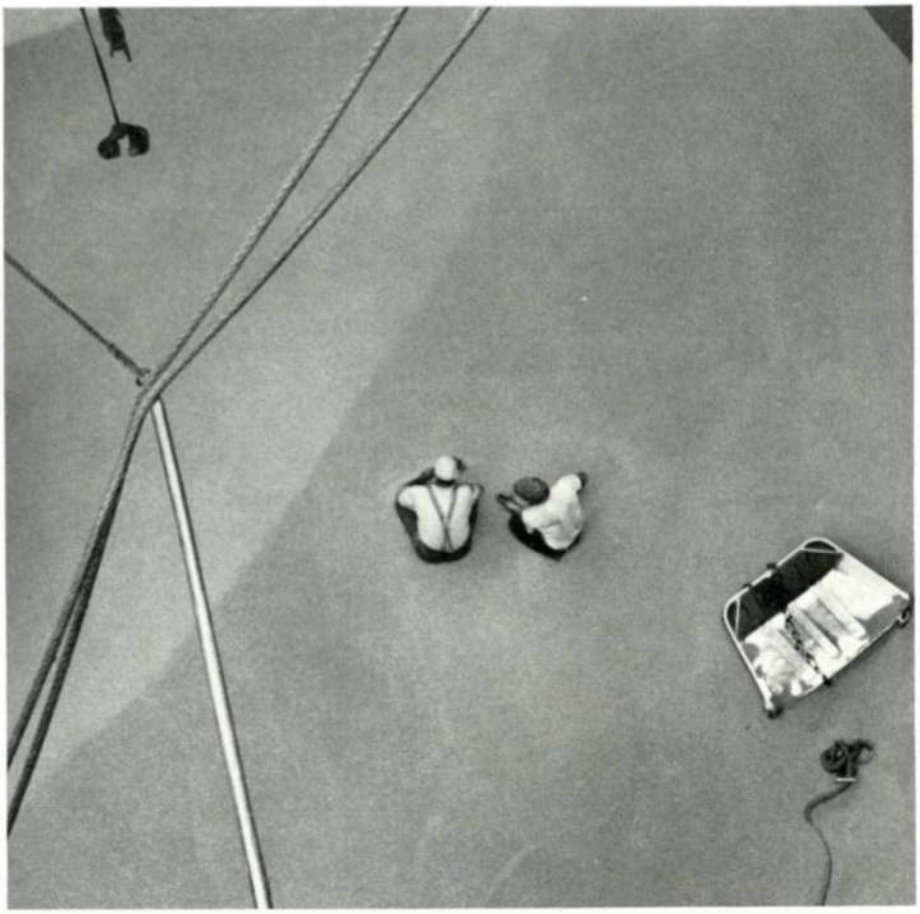
Rosemary Gilliat

Two giants of the Colonial Steamships Limited fleet—"John O. McKellar" and "Scott Misener" at Port Colborne on Lake Erie, where they discharge their cargoes of wheat from the lakehead. The "McKellar" is 678 feet long and can carry 22,000 tons of iron ore or 700,000 bushels of wheat. The "Scott Misener," 685 feet, can take 816,000 bushels of barley or 25,000 tons of ore. When the deep waterway is complete from Lake Superior to Montreal, ships like these will be able to carry grain from the lakehead to Seven Islands on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and return with Labrador iron ore for the steel mills along the lakes.

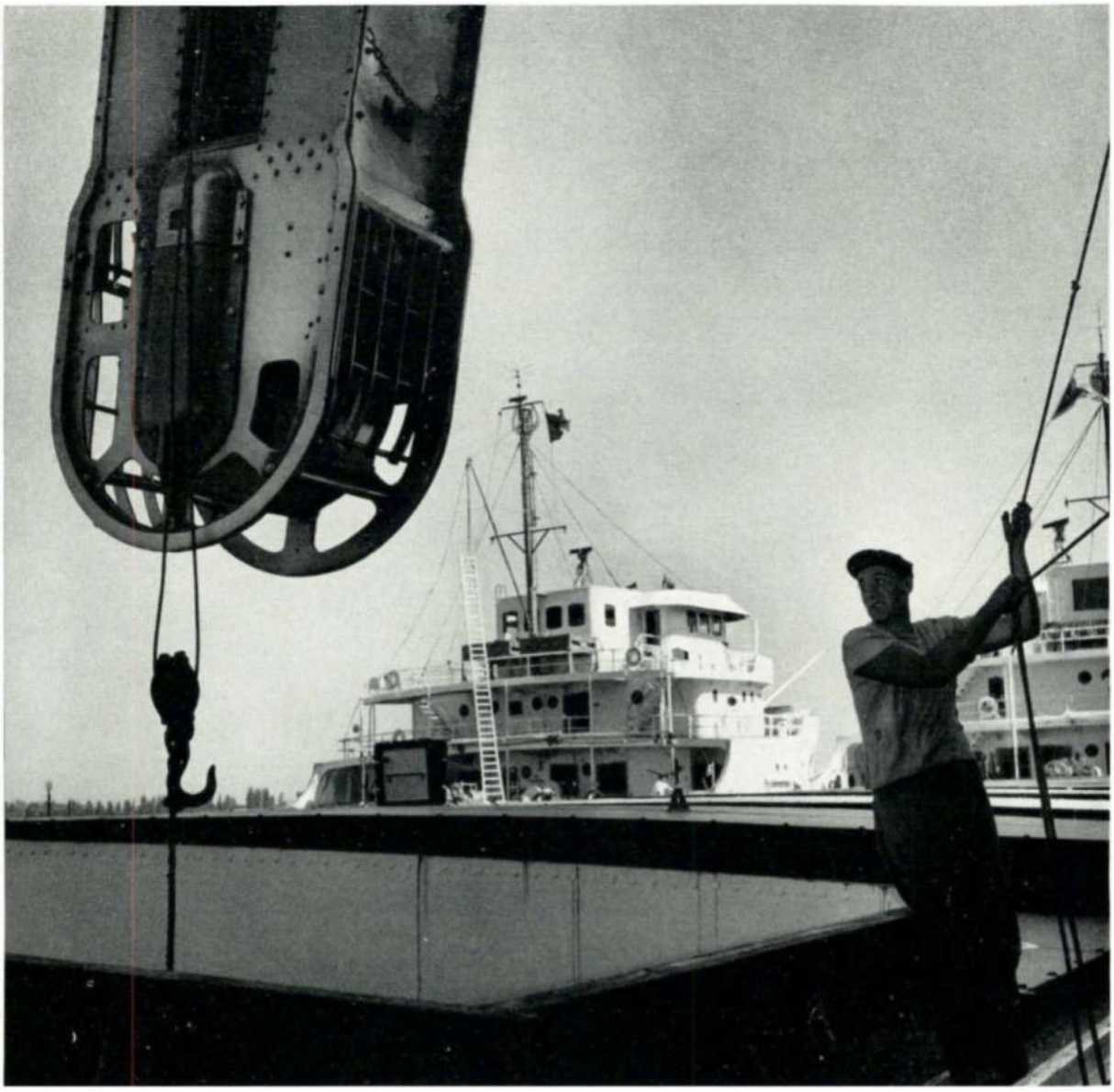
SEAWAY—III



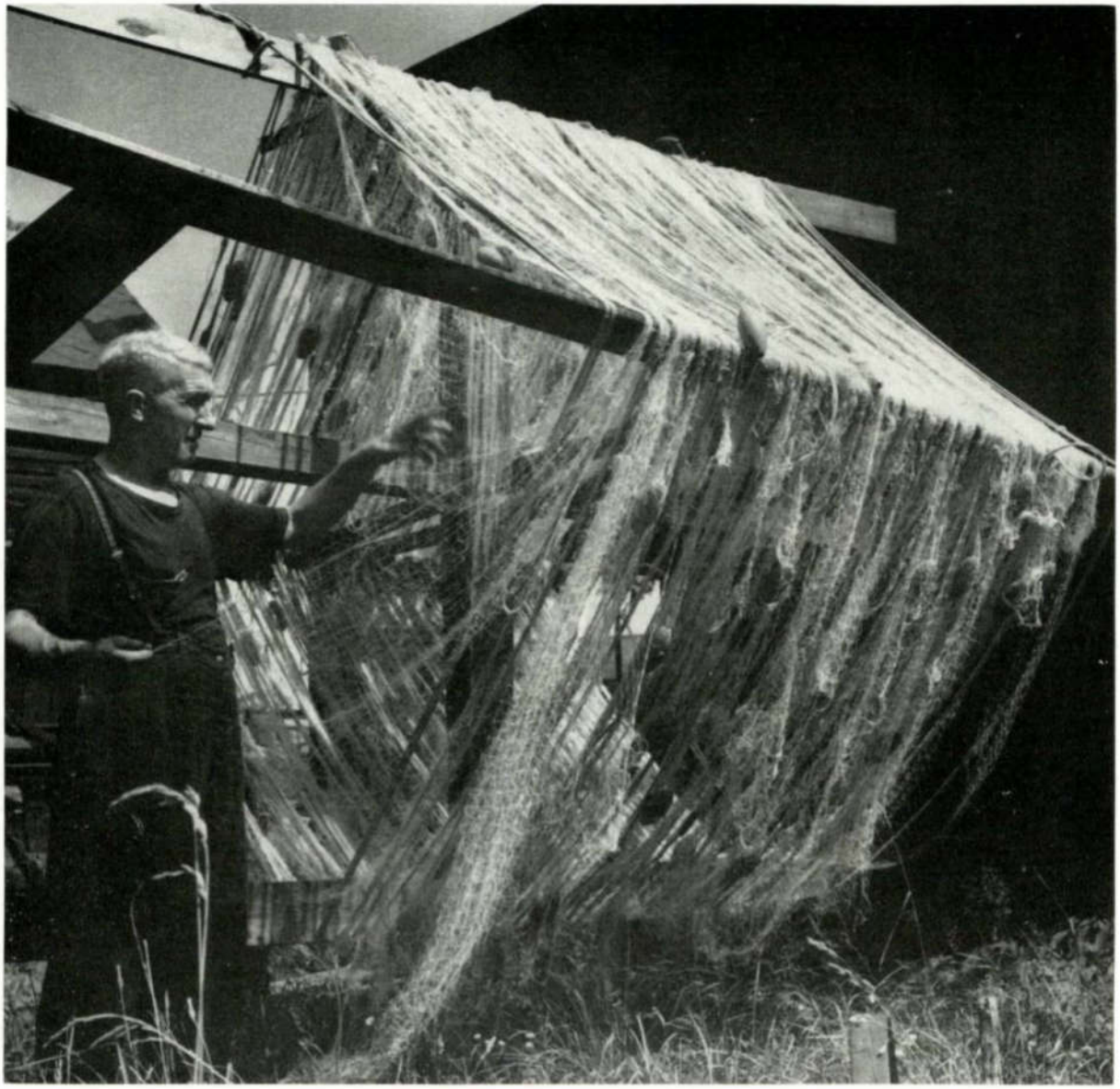
Her hold full to the hatches with wheat from the West, a Great Lakes carrier lies alongside the National Harbours Board elevator at Port Colborne, ready to be unloaded.



Looking down into a half-empty hold. Two "scoopers" wait for the leg of the grain elevator to be lowered, when they will go to work with their scoops operated with ropes and pulleys by an engine on deck.

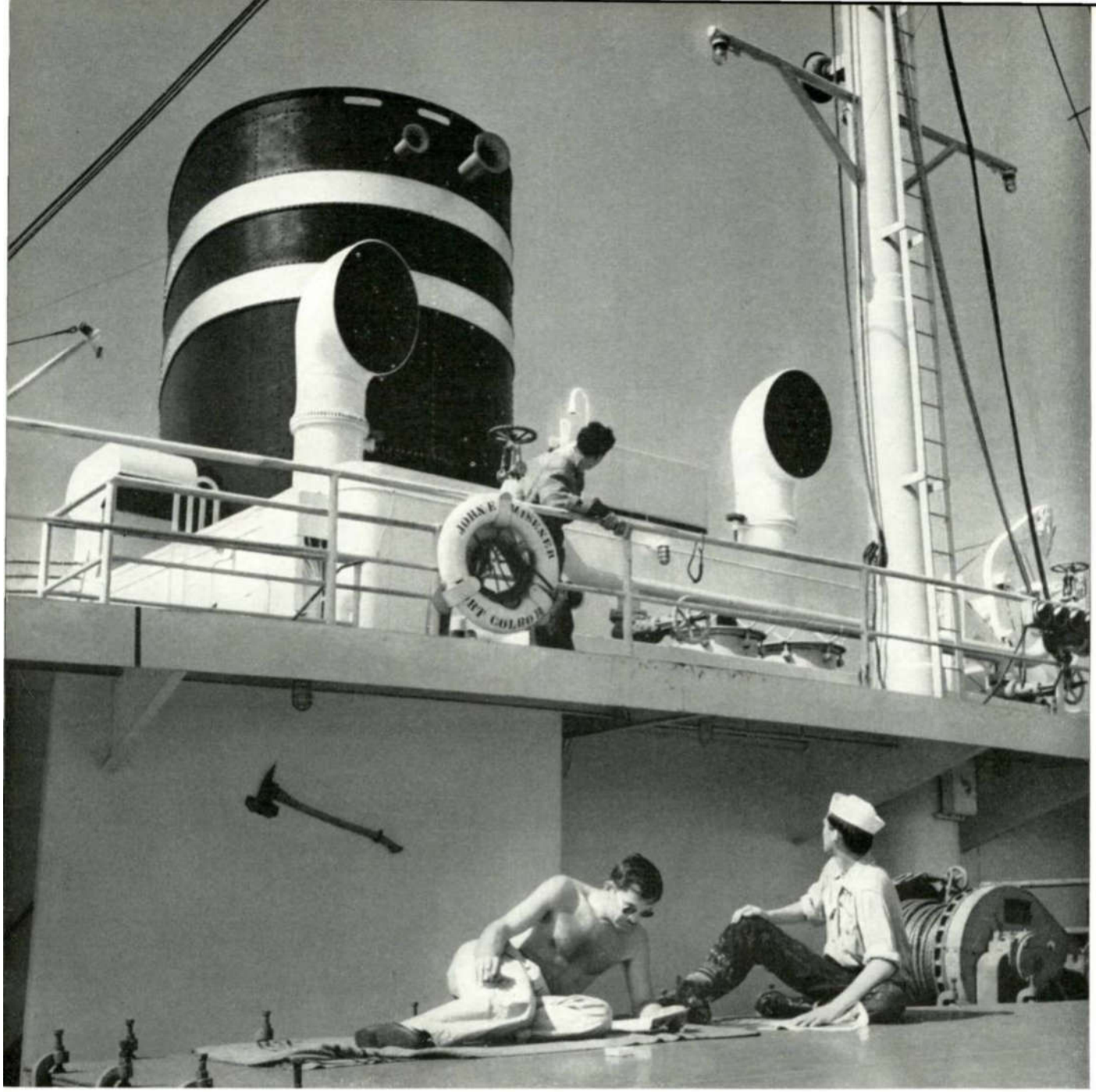


To hoist the wheat into the elevator, one of the great legs, containing buckets on an endless belt, is lowered into the hold of the "Scott Misener."



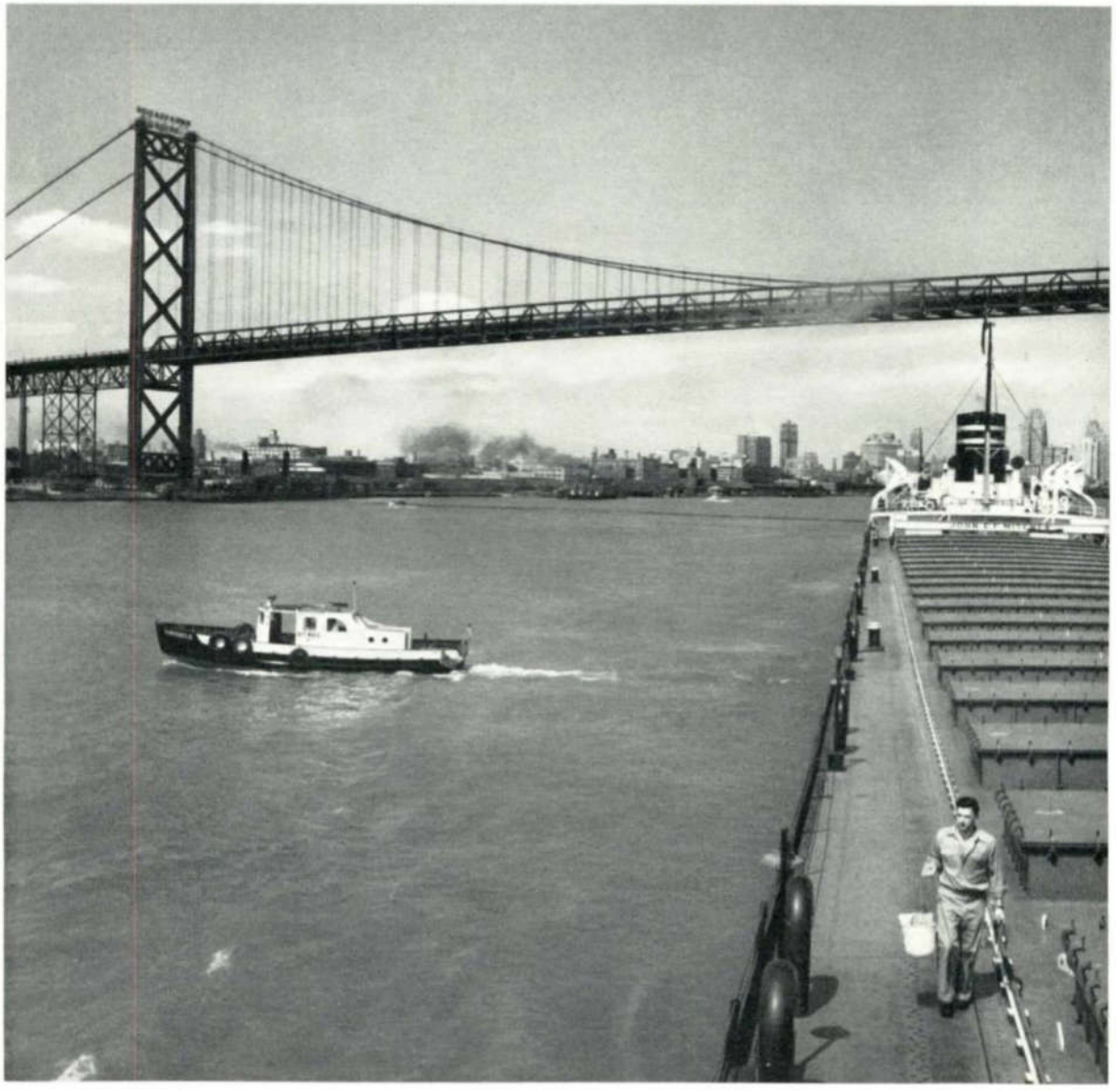
At Port Dover, an important fishing centre on the Canadian shore of Lake Erie, fifty miles west of Port Colborne, John Morrison disentangles a nylon net.

The Lynn River flows through Port Dover into Lake Erie. Not far from here on this river the explorer-priests, Dollier and Galinée, spent the winter of 1669-70, in what Galinée called an earthly paradise. "There is assuredly no more beautiful region," he wrote, "in all Canada."

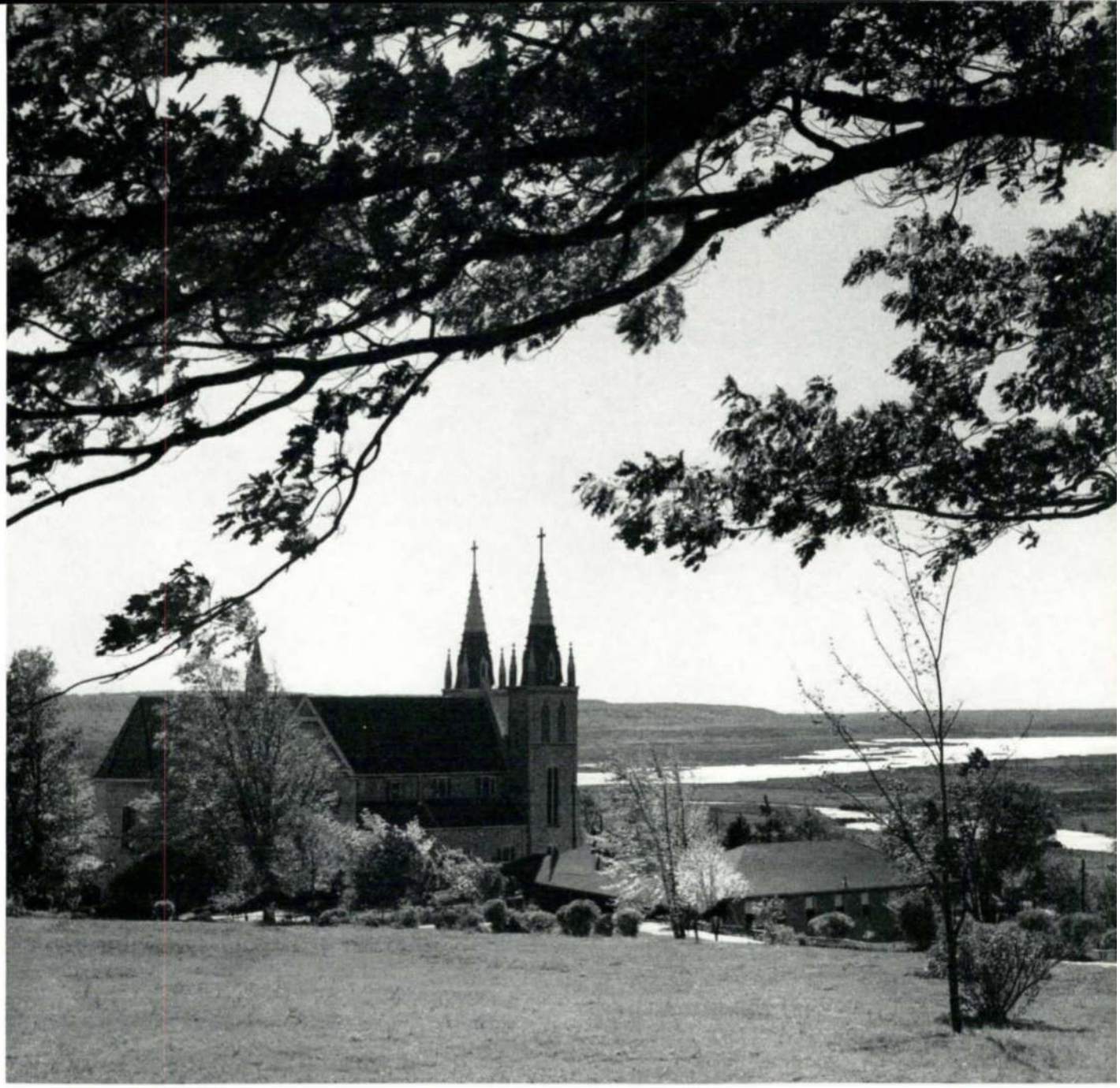


En route between ports, two off-duty crew members relax in the warm sun on a hatch cover of the "John E. F. Misener," while another does some painting.

Mail is delivered as the "Misener" passes under the Ambassador Bridge linking Detroit and Windsor. One of the crew heads for the bridge, carrying the letters in the bucket he has let down to the mail boat, seen heading back to Detroit.



The hulk of a British schooner of 1814, H.M.S. "Tecumseth," recently hauled up from the bottom of Lake Huron, lies on display beside the old fort at Penetanguishene, on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. During the war of 1812 the British had a naval base at Penetang, which Capt. John Franklin, R.N., referred to as "the key to Lake Huron." Near here Champlain landed in 1615 on his way to the Huron villages.



The Martyrs' Shrine near Midland, Ontario, overlooks the site of Fort Ste. Marie, the 17th Century Jesuit mission to the Hurons. Beyond lies the Wye River.

The fourth and final group of seaway pictures will appear in the summer Beaver.

MOOSE FORT JOURNALS, 1783-5

The latest volume of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, edited by E. E. Rich and A. M. Johnson with an introduction by G. P. de T. Glazebrook.

Reviewed by J. W. Anderson

THIS seventeenth volume of The Hudson's Bay Record Society, should be read—like the rest of them—in the light of its historical background. Montreal had fallen in 1760. The first inland H B C post, Cumberland House, had been built in 1774. Prince of Wales's Fort at Churchill and York Fort on the Hayes River had been destroyed by the French Admiral la Pérouse in 1782. The Treaty of Paris, ending the War of American Independence in 1783, brought a period of peace wherein the Company's affairs were not disturbed by international strife. It was a period of rebuilding and recovery from disaster, for no dividends were paid from 1783 to 1785. And it was also a period of gathering strength for that expansion of trade "away from the Bay" to meet the competition of "The Pedlars" from Montreal; a competition which, to the surprise of the Company, was more resolute, determined and far reaching than anything encountered under the French regime.

In reading these journals, one is constantly amazed at the manner in which the earlier fur traders met and mastered the difficulties of isolation. It is not easy for us moderns to visualize their situation. Their one tenuous life-line was the annual sailing ship from London, but seldom did it fail them in spite of ice, weather and the King's enemies. They had nothing to the south of them, for that was, for all practical purposes, enemy territory. Yet here they were, carrying on a great and growing business with method and despatch, maintaining themselves with but the scantiest of imports from England. No wonder, therefore, that each post was so largely self-contained, and one is constantly surprised at the multifarious activities carried on at the post day after day and varied only to suit the seasons. The keeping of journals was a duty ordered by the London Committee, and it is interesting to note that the style of journal already being written up in 1783-85 was, with little variation, continued until recent times.

Food was the ever present and pressing problem. Defence necessitated relatively large numbers of white men being kept at the Company's fortified establishments. It was therefore almost a physical impossibility, considering the size of the sailing ships and the restricted variety of preserved foods, to import enough to keep the establishments going. Hence the very great dependence on country food which was purchased from the Indians, hunted for by the white "servants," and to some extent raised in the country from imported cattle. There were, however, very definite limits to the amount of beef that could be raised for the table, for the work and labour involved in haymaking for winter fodder was out of proportion to the results achieved. Cattle therefore were raised mainly for draught animals used in the hauling of firewood and building logs. One very important spring and fall activity was the organization of the goose hunt with always at least one "proper person" in charge of each shooting locality. The leading Indians were given the titles of "captains" and so important was the victualing of the posts "off the country," one is tempted to think that Indians were worthy or otherwise in the eyes of the Company as much for their prowess in procuring food as for procuring furs! Certain it is that with food in the country in reasonable abundance for both whites and Indians, furs were usually available also. There are definite indications in the journals that the James Bay country was not so productive of food in the eighteenth as in the nineteenth century. It is surprising to read of occasionally large numbers of destitute Indians dependent on the trading post in times of food scarcity. On one occasion, April 9, 1784, Edward Jarvis at Fort Albany reports "have now upwards of 100 Indians old and young to feed daily and my geese except a few damaged ones are all done."

Though gardens were kept and are frequently mentioned, the impression gained is that sufficient advantage was not taken of this important food source. For instance there is never any mention of the potato crop. Yet in the nineteenth and twentieth century post journals an annual gathering of the potato crop was carefully recorded and special frost-protected root houses were maintained for storage. In fact, so great was the dependence of later-day posts on the potato crop, that its failure could produce distress as acute as a failure of the goose hunt at Moose Fort in the days covered by the journals under review. Vegetable gardens, it is true, require labour—sometimes a scarce commodity at Moose Fort during the summer freighting season. But the journals indicate that gardening was an activity of secondary importance, whereas it could have been made to yield rich rewards in terms of labour expended.

Throughout the journals, in recording the daily activities, there are frequent references to "brewed small beer." Why? Well, "small beer," signifying a light ale, was the standard beverage of the day. There was no tea or coffee, at least not for the "servants" as the working men were called. Tea or coffee was not sold in the trade and would appear to have been imported in very small quantities as a luxury for the table of the "gentlemen." By all accounts tea was much more of a luxury than brandy! Also con-

Mr. Anderson has served the Hudson's Bay Company for 45 years. He came to Canada through Hudson Strait in 1910 and until 1934 served at various posts around James Bay. From 1931 to 1937 he was manager of that district.

nected with the culinary department was the "grinding of oatmeal" which likewise gets frequent references in the journals. There were of course, no canned meats or other foods in those days. Dependence on salted or pickled meats is emphasized by the fact that a special water-hole was cut in the Moose River where, during the winter months, salt beef, pork and codfish and salted geese were "put in the water to freshen."

In reading the journals it is very interesting to find how many of the present day Moose Factory local place names were already, in the years 1783-85, fixed for all time: Maidman Creek, Hencock Creek, Doctor's Creek, Butler's Creek and Hay Creek. Bushy Island, Hayes Island, South Bluff Island, Middleborough Island, Pilgrim Island and Puppy Island. Puppy Island, alas, has disappeared in the swirling flood-waters of the Moose River. In 1910 it still had a potato garden on it, but the ice at break-up time was nibbling away until finally it disappeared in the twenties of the present century. For centuries ships have come and gone from the Moose River so that such beacon points as Shipsands, Sand Head, North Bluff and East Bluff are as recognizable to the present day reader as they were to John Thomas, Master of Moose Fort in the years 1783-85.

One of the interesting stories recorded in the journals under review is the slow gathering of strength of the Great Company for the development of inland trade to meet the competition of the "Montreal Pedlars." To the modern reader this development may appear slow, clumsy and sometimes ineffectual. We must remember however that these men were empirically developing a new system of transportation in strange rivers and waterways, through the territories of Indians often indifferent and sometimes hostile. It is easy to point out that the servants of the Company, most of whom were indentured and served for a period of only five years, were for the most part unsuitable as voyageurs. But there was no alternative, as very few of the Indians of that day were trained for commercial freighting on inland waters. It took years of trial and error in the eighteenth century to develop the hardy Indian voyageurs who reached their peak of efficiency in the nineteenth century to spread the Company's trade fanwise, up the numerous rivers flowing into "Ye bottom of Ye Bay."

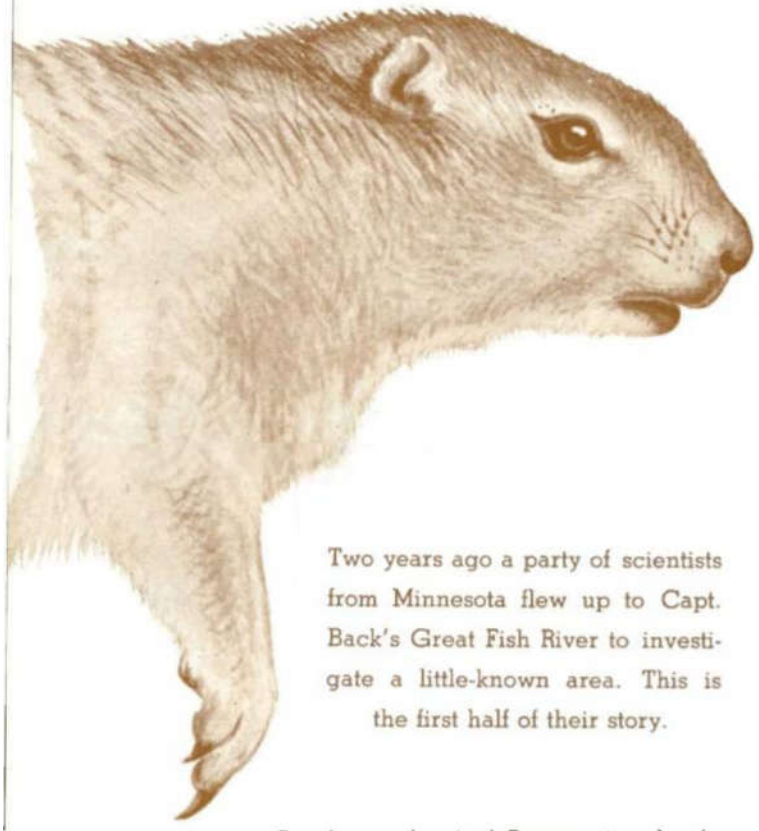
In reading the journals one is impressed with the fact that, then as now, so much of the success of the trading post as a business enterprise, and the well-being of the staff, depended on the calibre of the manager. If he could combine leadership with a degree of efficiency, life—even in those austere days—could be very tolerable. There was much hard work and, in emergencies, very long hours. But there were also times of relaxation and pleasant duties. Even the sawyers, camped in the woods as they were, and doing the hard work of whipsawing boards, could have a comfortable camp wherein they could relax with contentment in their leisure hours. Scurvy, with the white staff, seems to have been rather common. It is difficult for the modern trader to understand this disease and its prevalence. But salt meat was the important diet and the most important item of country food, geese, was mostly salted also. Fish, though constantly used, seems not to have been too abundant. The incidence of sickness in the white staff appears to have been fairly high; and of course, there were occasional accidents and tragic happenings. But the London Committee were mindful of the health of their servants and invariably surgeons were stationed at the coast forts and sometimes inland as well.

The London Committee enjoined the "Master" to care for the well-being of his staff, spiritual as well as material. As for the Indians, he was to deal with them justly and equitably, a tradition which has been maintained throughout the centuries. And as the Master had ever foremost in his mind the procuring of more and more furs "for their Lordships' interest," it was therefore in his best interests to promote the welfare of his native customers. Indians were given free medical treatment by the Company surgeons, and where they were not available, by the Master himself. Medical work amongst the Indians has always been an important responsibility of the post manager up until quite recent times.

Besides the journals themselves, this volume carries a very fine introduction which will whet the reader's interest for more details. Appendix A covers the Moose Fort correspondence books for 1783-85 and, with the journals, gives many interesting sidelights on how business was conducted in those far off days.

Appendix B gives an absorbing historical record of Albany, Brunswick House, Eastmain, Frederick House, Moose Fort and Rupert's River posts from the date of their establishment to the period under review. From the Moose Fort story the reader will fall upon a remarkable hiatus in the historical record of this establishment. Moose Fort was first established in 1673 but was captured by the French under De Troyes in 1686. It remained abandoned until re-established on the same Hayes Island in 1730. Samuel Hearne's plan of Moose River dated 1774 shows Moose Fort on Factory Island. Therefore, sometime between 1730 amd 1774 Moose Fort was moved from Hayes Island to Factory Island where it now stands. But thus far no historical record has appeared as to when or why this move was undertaken.

There is a very good index to this volume and also three maps of the Albany, Moose and Slude (Eastmain) river estuaries by Samuel Hearne. One cannot help being absorbed in the biographies of Atkinson, Jarvis, Maugenest and Thomas, particularly Maugenest. And one can but admire Edward Jarvis, surgeon of London, who in the autumn—of all times—made an exploratory journey with an Indian guide from Albany Fort, up the Ghost River (a tributary of the Albany) to find out where it joined with the Moose River watershed. He nearly starved on the way and suffered the greatest of privations before finally arriving at Moose Fort on November 19, 1775, with what was, after all, a relatively useless piece of information. But it is easy to be wise after the event, and to criticize these early fur traders. They were living in a vast, inhospitable, largely unknown country, and the zeal of their explorations redounds to their credit. ◆



NATURALISTS on the BACK RIVER

by R. J. Wilkie
and W. J. Breckenridge

Two years ago a party of scientists from Minnesota flew up to Capt. Back's Great Fish River to investigate a little-known area. This is the first half of their story.

Parry's ground squirrel. From a water colour by Dr. Breckenridge.

EARLY in 1953, the University of Minnesota-Wilkie Expedition was organized to carry on biological and geological investigations along the lower reaches of Back's Great Fish River, whose rocky course only two parties of white explorers had previously travelled—Captain Back's in 1834 and James Anderson's in 1855. Dotted lines marked most of the course of the river on the best Canadian topographic maps and the entire area adjacent to the river was marked "unexplored." However, by 1950 the Royal Canadian Air Force had recorded most of the area by high altitude trimetrogon photography, and although official maps were not yet available, photostats were generously supplied to the expedition by the Canadian Department of Mines and Technical Surveys.

Churchill, Manitoba, our take-off point, on the western shore of Hudson Bay, straddles the dividing line between spruce forests to the south and tundra to the north. Here the tundra plants and animals mingle with the forest species. This lush southern edge of the tundra is a paradise for field naturalists. While we were making our preparations, a polar bear was frightening people at the air base; several caribou were seen; birds in great variety were just arriving on the tundra; and masses of arctic plants were bursting into bloom. The ice on the Churchill River had gone out on June 19 and by July 1 the ice was beginning to disappear on Hudson Bay.

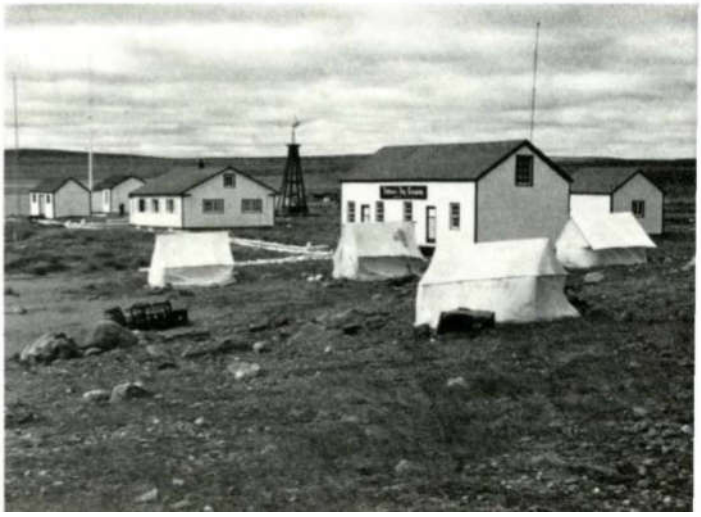
We soon learned that carefully planned schedules for flying into the Back River country didn't mean a thing. All through the winter, planes can operate with skis. Then comes the break-up period when the ice has melted at Churchill but is still frozen in latitudes near the Arctic Circle, and very little flying is attempted in a north-south direction. Later one can go in on a plane equipped with floats but in the meantime one just sits and waits.

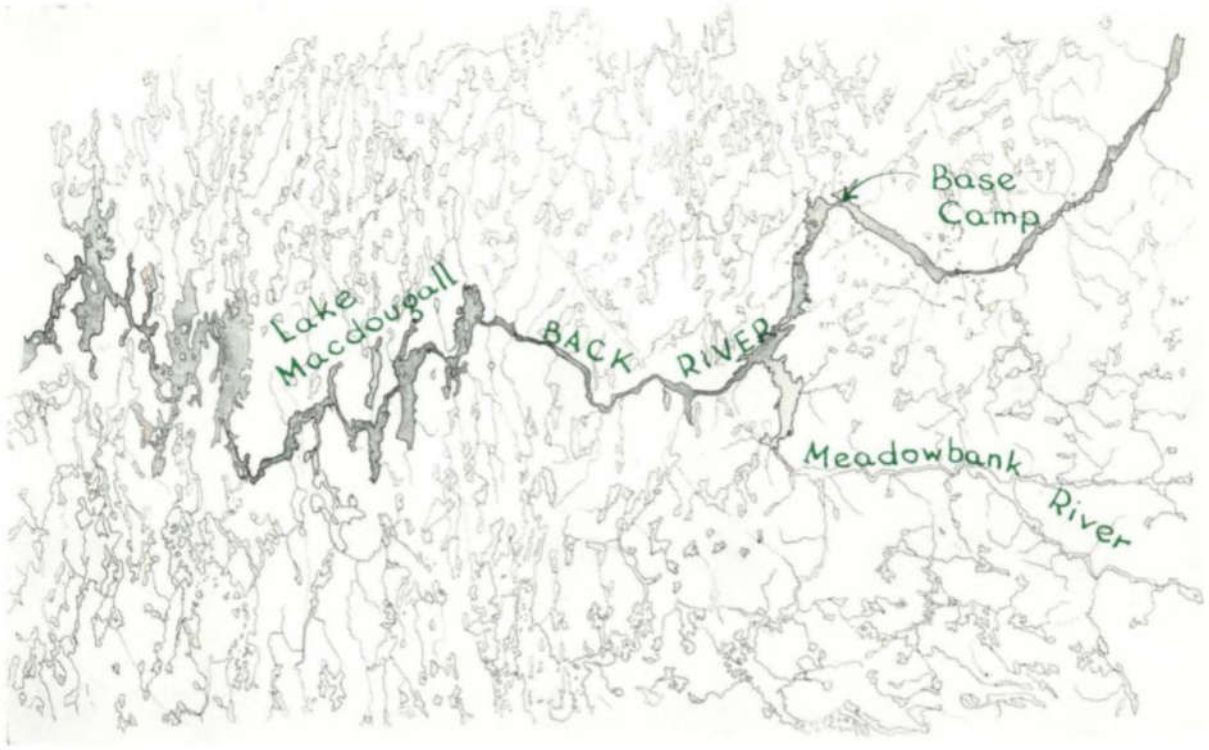
Mr. Wilkie is a member of the Wilkie Foundation which helped finance the expedition. Dr. Breckenridge is director of the Minnesota Museum of Natural History.

During the first week in July reports came in that the ice was beginning to break up in the District of Keewatin, north of Baker Lake. Finally on the morning of July 12, expedition leader Breckenridge led off for points north in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's amphibious plane with pilot Ed Wellein and observer Wes Newcomb. Following closely, the rugged Norseman plane of Arctic Wings piloted by Charlie Weber, and another Norseman of the R.C.A.F. took off from Landing Lake heading for Back's Great Fish River. As we flew north, we crossed over Kaminuriak Lake still covered with ice, little knowing that this would be the scene of a near disaster on our return trip. Ice still covered most of Baker Lake. The western end was open. Here we landed, and taxied up to the Hudson's Bay post to refuel and to spend the night.

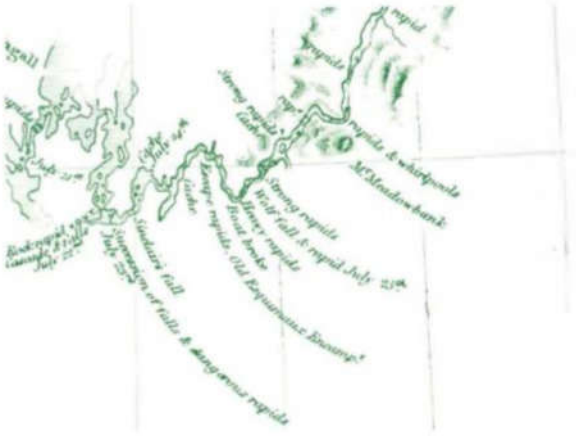
On our arrival at the settlement, Sandy Lunan, a fine ruddy-faced Scotsman who had been in charge of the Hudson's Bay post there for 17 years, met us and gave orders to his smiling Eskimo housekeeper to "kill the fatted calf." But here, just before the annual supply boat from Churchill was to arrive, this meant to open a tin of canned beef. Scott McRae, the R.C.M. policeman on duty did not, of course, wear his traditional red uniform. A wonderfully

The Hudson's Bay post at Baker Lake. T. H. Manning.





Top: Air-survey map of the Back River east of Lake Macdougall. Right: Roughly the same area from the map in Capt. Back's "Arctic Land Expedition." The mouth of the Meadowbank River is shown to the west of Mount Meadowbank.



husky, well-conditioned physical specimen he was, friendly and cooperative. His pretty young wife was conspicuous in her white parka beautifully trimmed in red by the skilled Eskimo needlewomen.

Baker Lake is a tiny disjointed sort of settlement sprawled out for a mile along the shore of a narrow inlet at the mouth of the Thelon River. In addition to the above it boasts an excellent two-way radio station, Anglican and Roman Catholic mission, Department of Transport representatives and one of the few air strips north of Churchill. A few Eskimo families make up the rest of the village. It is the trading centre for the Eskimos of the Thelon River and from the vast barren country to the north including the lower Back River.

After a short night's rest in our sleeping bags rolled out on Sandy Lunan's dining room floor, Charlie warmed up the Norseman plane and the first flight headed north to the Back River country. Camp was located at 66° 10′ north latitude, 96° 57′ west longitude. Here our tents were set up on a boulder and gravel point jutting out into the Back River 15 miles below the mouth of the Meadowbank River. Two additional flights brought in the rest of the seven-man party and equipment, the last landing shortly after midnight.

But night or day, work or flying could progress without interruption since July nights were like brilliant sunsets throughout. After pitching camp we were "champing at the bit," of course, to see what the Back River barren grounds were like.

The Chipewyans call this great eastward-flowing river Thlew-ee-choh-dezeth or Great Fish River. We found that the Caribou Eskimos who live on the river call it Shaningayou.* After Captain George Back's Arctic Land Expedition of 1834, when he explored the river from its source to the Arctic Ocean, it became known as Back's Great Fish River. Maps now refer to it simply as the Back River. This last name is fitting in another sense since it is as remote as any large river on this continent. In fact, it is the largest river entirely within the Barrens Lands of North America.

*Western Arctic Eskimos call it *Han-ning-i-o-a*, meaning that it runs crosswise to all other rivers in that region.—Ed.

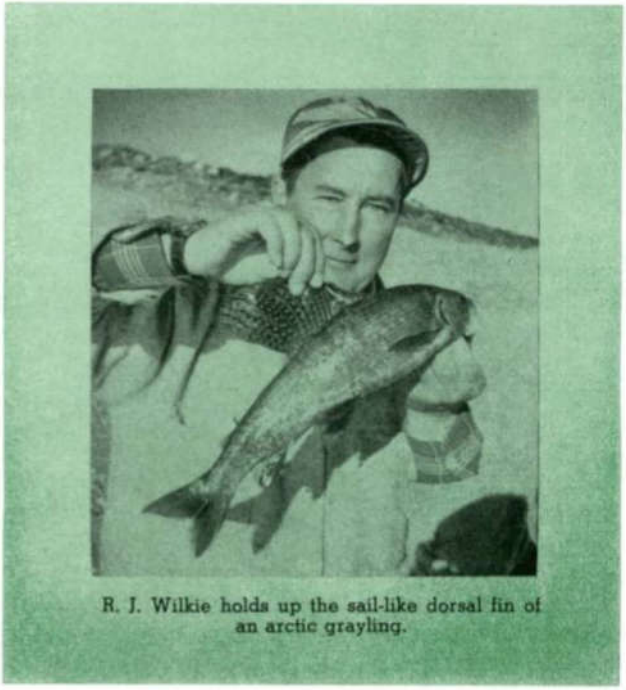
Its source is the height of land northeast of Great Slave Lake. From here the Back River flows eastward through 530 miles of rock-studded barren lands roughly paralleling the Arctic Circle. Not a single tree grows along its entire course. Three enormous lakes are located mid-length of the river—Lake Pelly, Lake Garry and Lake Macdougall. Over 80 cascades, rapids and waterfalls interrupt its turbulent and often tortuous passage as it descends to the Arctic Ocean. Escape Rapids, Rock Rapids, Whirlpool Rapids are a few of the names which attest to its ferocity. In width the river varies from a few hundred feet at some of the rapids to over ten miles at Garry Lake.

In 1845, at the age of 59, Sir John Franklin organized his final expedition in search of the Northwest Passage. He sailed with two ships, the *Erebus* and *Terror* with crews of 129 men. During this trip, Franklin and all hands perished. After Franklin's death, his men left their ships and made an attempt to reach the valley of the Great Fish River. Parts of the ships and many pieces of their equipment have since been found on islands in Chantrey Inlet and in the camps of the Eskimos along the river. Over thirty-nine expeditions were organized to search for Franklin and his men. One of these was led by James Anderson, a Hudson's Bay Company Chief Factor. Anderson retraced Back's route on the Great Fish River but found nothing of Franklin's men, except a few relics on islands off the river's mouth. Anderson reported his trip in a letter to the Hudson's Bay Company and in a journal but added little of biological interest to the descriptions of the region given by Back and King.

The Back River itself which dominated the landscape as well as all of our activities while we were in the region was a living, constantly changing part of our environment. While flying in we had seen something of its boisterous character as here its course was deflected by a rugged, quartzite hill, or there it had cut its way through a jumble of boulders left by the glaciers. Geologist Taylor determined the river's width at camp was 900 feet. With some soundings as deep as 75 feet and flow measurements of two feet per second, he came up with the figure of 100,000 cubic feet per second flow on July 18.

Aside from the rushing waters themselves, the Back River was of interest and importance to us as a source of fish both for food and as scientific specimens. Although hook and line fishing was good, it was not phenomenal. The abundant insect life evidently provided ample rations for the fish. Our short piece of gill net, on the other hand, met with excellent success. Whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*) and Tullibee (*Leucichthys artedi*) were common and some Lake Trout (*Cristivomer namaycush*) attained weights of up to 20 pounds. The Arctic Char (*Salvelinus alpinus*) and Grayling (*Thymallus signifer*) were the new and exciting varieties for us. The enormous dorsal fin of the grayling suggested a sail. The Char, with its bright red flesh was voted the best eating.

After three weeks with the abundant wildlife around Churchill, we were not prepared for the extreme barrenness of this part of the barrens though we had checked



R. J. Wilkie holds up the sail-like dorsal fin of an arctic grayling.

enough arctic literature to realize that the rugged interior of Keewatin would not be as rich in bird and mammal life as the coastal areas and the Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary 200 miles to the southwest. Our best efforts in three and a half weeks identified only thirty species of birds, fourteen of which were represented by from one to five individuals. We saw only five species of mammals. In the Fifth Thule Expedition Report appears a crude but recognizable map drawn by a Thelon River Eskimo indicating a tributary of the Back River not far from our base camp for which the Eskimo name translated meant, "The very deserted place." No wonder we found but little when the Eskimos, so skilled at wresting a living from one of the world's most barren regions, described the area as "deserted."

We were perturbed by the entire absence of caribou. We had hoped to photograph and study at least some scattered bands but only a few tracks were found near our base camp. A mouldering, lichen-covered skull was all the evidence we found of muskox, the other arctic ungulate we had hoped to find in the cotton grass meadows where Captain Back and Anderson had seen herds grazing. Three and a half miles west of camp, Spence Taylor stumbled onto the only arctic fox den found in the base camp area. Remains of collared lemmings, Parry's ground squirrels, and arctic char lying about the burrow revealed at least in part the fox family menu.

We found the collared and the brown or Back's lemmings living their secretive lives under the dense mats of sphagnum moss, dwarf birch, Labrador tea and sedge. Population counts of lemmings which Harvey Gunderson made by trapping indicated that although they were not at the low point in their roughly four-year population cycle, they were far from a peak of abundance. A Hudson's Bay Company man, Angus Gavin, while near Perry River, 150 miles to the northwest, reported travelling for miles through a migration of lemmings all moving eastward. His estimate of their abundance was one per square yard.

By way of contrast, none of our party saw even a single lemming active on the surface.

The barrenness of the gravelly soil here was emphasized by the fact that the nitrogen, phosphorus and other minerals added to the soil by the droppings and food remnants about fox dens or ground squirrel burrows made the sedges and grasses grow luxuriantly, and such dens and burrows were often noticed from a distance because of this lush growth of greenery. Also the bright orange nitrogen-loving lichen, *Caloplaca elegans*, grew abundantly below the cliff nests of the peregrine falcon and rough-legged hawks, making them stand out in some places like the proverbial sore thumb.

Our only peregrine falcon nest was found on July 21, perched high on the precipitous east side of Mount Meadowbank, a bald quartzite headland about 450 feet above the Back River a short distance south of base camp. The extreme shyness of the rough-legged hawks was completely unexpected. The long bedrock ridge two miles northwest of camp was territory of one lone adult roughleg which we had difficulty approaching closely enough to identify with nine-power binoculars before it would disappear for the day. Another pair hunted the territory about the fox den where we located three or four ancient, lichen-covered cliff nests which doubtless had cradled many generations of hawks. One newer but empty nest had a fresh feather clinging to its rim, but either this pair was not breeding or we failed to locate the active eyrie. These birds were less shy than their lone neighbor, but far from approachable.

No birds whatsoever would be called abundant in this deserted place of the Caribou Eskimo, but families of Lapland longspurs were scattered regularly over the tundra about camp while a few American pipits lived in the scattered boulder fields. Here and there the contrasting black and white plumage of a male snow bunting made it conspicuous while the grey females and young often, no doubt, escaped notice.

A week-old rock ptarmigan. From a water colour by Dr. Breckenridge.

One of the most obvious and far-from-appreciated forms of life that kept us lively and wide awake was the mosquito population. These little insects tended to alight on dark surfaces, which presumably absorbed heat. John Jarosz one day killed 66 of them with one swat. We came well defended against their onslaughts, however, with several types of chemical repellents which we were testing for the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps. Specific information on the repellents' relative effectiveness cannot be released here, but several provided excellent protection against the bites. However, we soon found that they had to alight momentarily in order to be driven off by the repellent, and this constant pelting was bothersome so that occasionally we had to resort to head nets for relief. While temperatures were in the thirties and low forties, the mosquitoes settled into hiding and did not bother us at all, while even above those temperatures the insects were not as enterprising and vicious as mosquitoes in the higher temperatures farther south. The almost constant wind helped keep the pests away from one's windward side, but walking with the wind, one's face was in the lee and really took a beating. Black flies put in their appearance the last of July and although they were of a species not noted for their belligerence, their numbers were very annoying.

The scarcity of bird and mammal life gave us opportunity to get better acquainted with arctic flora. The very presence of so many varieities of tiny plants in such rigorous surroundings invited study as to how they could possibly survive. The Canadian botanist, Porsild, reports finding the big, rose-purple petals of an arctic fireweed blossom frozen brittle as a cornflake, but an hour later after melting in the sun they showed no ill effects whatsoever. One of the striking features of the flora was that practically all were perennials. The short growing season simply did not allow time for them to blossom and produce seeds in a single season. On the beach at camp there were tiny arctic fireweeds, poppies, and oxyria (*Oxyria digyna*) still emerging from the receding waters of the river as late as the last days of July. Individual plants marked and carefully watched made almost no appreciable growth in the week that followed. Obviously but little development could be accomplished before the freezeup. Then another winter's dormancy would terminate with the rising river levels of spring and these plants would find themselves under at least twelve to fifteen feet of flood waters which again would not recede till late July. Then a few more leaves would be added and doubtless a number of years would pass before flowers could bloom and seeds mature. One might well comment, however, that the gorgeous blossoms of the fireweed (*Epilobium latifolium*), arctic poppy (*Papaver radicatum*), Lapland rhododendron (*Rhododendron lapponicum*), moss pink (*Silene acaule*), arctic arnica (*Arnica alpina*), and a host of others were well worth waiting for in this otherwise drab and dreary tundra. ◆

The second and last instalment of this article will appear in the Summer Beaver.

Dr. Rae's Halkett boat, recently brought to light at Kirkwall, and now in the Stromness museum. This is apparently the top side.

Footnotes to the Franklin Search

I—HALKETT'S AIR BOAT

A YEAR ago in the Rae Centenary number of the *Beaver* there was a Packet note which asked for further information on the inflated "india-rubber boat" invented by Lieut. Peter Halkett, R.N., and used by Rae and others in the Arctic. Now what is probably the only Halkett boat extant has turned up in Orkney, and moreover it is Dr. Rae's own boat. It has been presented to the Stromness Museum by John Bremner, harbourmaster at Kirkwall. Before he had it, it belonged to a Miss Peace of Kirkwall, to whom Dr. Rae himself presented it, and for many decades it had lain on the rafters of Peace's woodyard, apparently forgotten.

J. G. Marwick, honorary curator of the Stromness Museum, describes the boat in *The Orcadian* of October 14, 1953, a copy of which was sent to the *Beaver* by Mrs. A. St. L. Trigge of Richmond, P.Q., a grand-niece of Rae's.

"As is only to be expected," writes Mr. Marwick, "this air-boat is now in a very dilapidated condition. The many layers of cotton material used in its construction are badly perished, but sufficient of the air-boat still remains by which it can be easily identified—the inlet air valve of brass, and what appears to be an air-escape valve, also of brass. There are some letters on the rough canvas outer covering, but owing to its dried up condition, these have not yet been deciphered. This air-boat, as it now lies all deflated, measures 8 feet 9 inches long by 3 feet broad." And he goes on to quote the Packet note from the March *Beaver*.

An earlier item in the *Orcadian* gives a few more details:

"It is constructed of a canvas-Mackintosh composition, and is 8 or 9 feet long and 4 feet broad. Roughly oval in shape, it has a sort of cockpit about 5 feet long and 2 feet wide with a valve at each end. The function of these valves, however, is not clear. On the starboard side, towards the stern, is the valve through which the vessel was inflated, and on either side are two loops, through which it is supposed that stretchers were passed to ensure complete rigidity when fully inflated.

"At both bow and stern are mooring rings, and round the widest part of the hull is a canvas flange in which are set eyelets, possibly for fenders, etc. There are two fenders

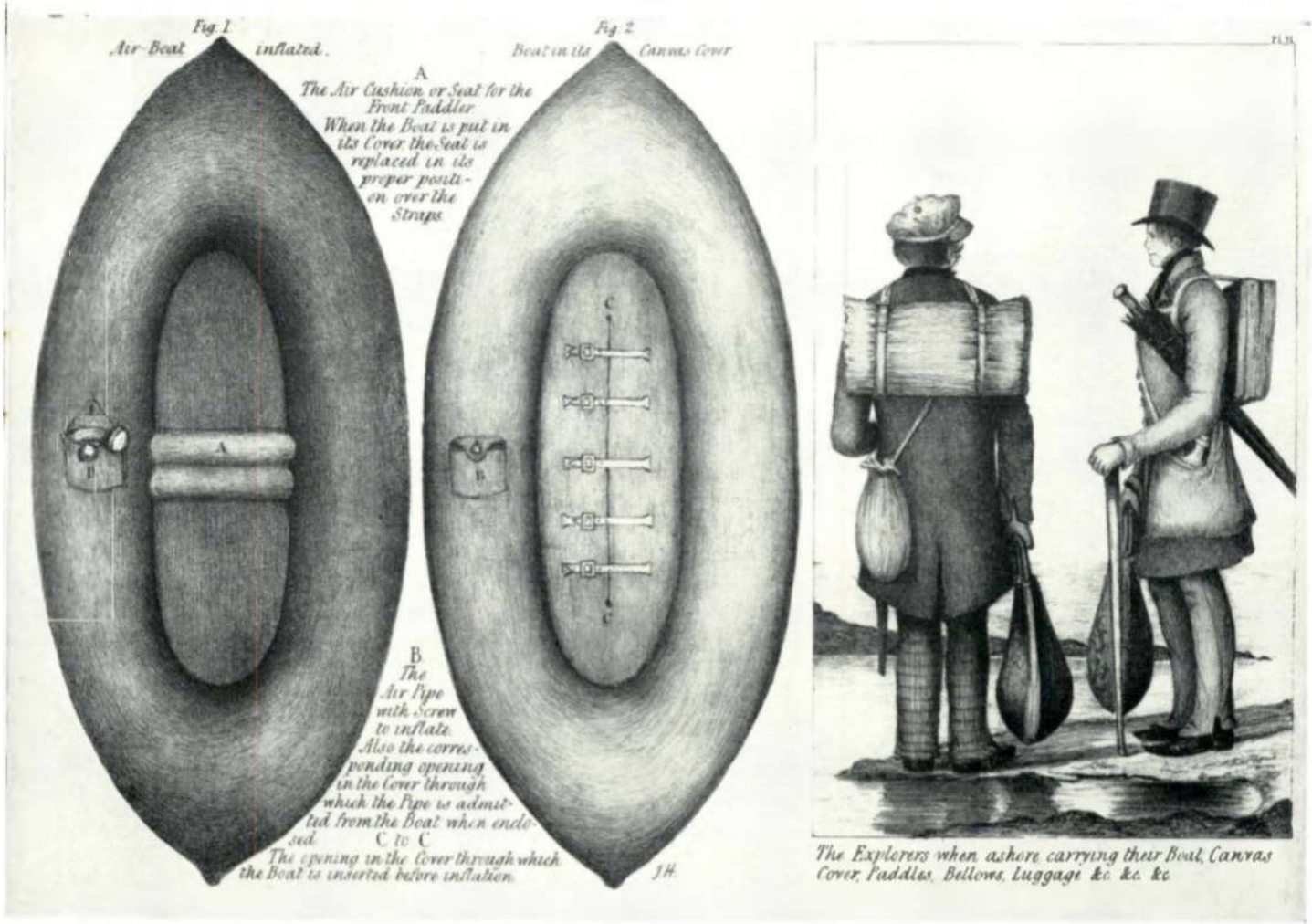


Fig. 1
Air-Boat inflated.
A
The Air Cushion or Seat for the Front Paddler
When the Boat is put in its Cover the Seat is replaced in its proper position over the Straps
B
The Air Pipe with Screw to inflate. Also the corresponding opening in the Cover through which the Pipe is admitted from the Boat when enclosed.
C to C
The opening in the Cover through which the Boat is inserted before inflation.
J.H.
Fig. 2
Boat in its Canvas Cover
The Explorers when ashore carrying their Boat, Canvas Cover, Paddles, Bellows, Luggage &c. &c. &c

Drawings by John Halkett, the inventor's father, taken from the book on the Halkett boat. Note the carpet bags, and the umbrella which was used as a sail. The contents of the bottle were presumably for reconditioning the fabric, or the paddler.

By courtesy of the trustees of the British Museum.

with it—one in good condition, and one burst. They are filled with small pieces of cork." A letter from the museum gives the additional information that what appears to be the remains of Dr. Rae's name is painted on the bow.

Dr. J. M. Wordie, P.R.G.S., who collaborated with Dr. Cyriax on the writing of the introduction to the Rae volume of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, has seen the boat, and has pointed out that Lieut. Halkett wrote an illustrated book on his invention, a copy of which is in the British Museum entitled *Boat-Cloak or Cloak-Boat/ constructed of Macintosh India-rubber cloth/ with Paddle, Umbrella-sail, Bellows, &c./ Also/ An inflated India-Rubber Cloth-Boat for Two Paddlers.*

The text reads in part:

"The Inventor of the Inflated Cloak—and also of the Cloth-boat for two persons—had, at the time of his contriving them, been strongly advised . . . to submit a description of them to the notice of the Admiralty. . . . In his early experiments he had satisfied himself as to the convenience and security of this novel mode of water-conveyance. His first aquatic trip, of any consequence, on board his Cloak, was from Kew to Westminster-bridge. In the course of that experimental voyage he was met by—passed by—and almost run down by—various Metropolitan Steamers plying to and fro in their several vocations, and causing no little commotion in the troubled waters of the River . . . the Admiralty was pleased to order that a Cloak-boat, as also his larger Cloth-boat adapted for two persons, should be made under the Inventor's instructions . . . to be examined and tested at Portsmouth and Spithead. . . . This was accordingly done, and it may be permitted to the Inventor here to subjoin an extract of a letter addressed to him by the Secretary of the Admiralty, dated 8th May, 1845, 'My Lords are of opinion that your invention is extremely clever and ingenious, and that it might be useful in Exploring and Surveying Expeditions, but they do not consider that it would be made applicable for general purposes in the Naval Service'. . . . Respecting his invention, and its uses, he has received the full and friendly corroboration of Sir John Franklin's opinion, by the two surviving officers who shared with him in the dangers and distresses of their first Arctic Expedition—by Captain Sir George Back, R.N., and by Dr. Sir John Richardson, F.R.S. . . .

"Sir George Simpson also, who, for many years, has had the chief superintendence in North America, of the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company, carried out with him, in the year 1845, one of these double Air-boats (similar to

that which was constructed for Sir John Franklin) for the use of the Land Arctic Expedition of Discovery at that time projected on the part of the Company—an Expedition which was then unavoidably postponed to the following season: and, in order that Sir George might not be disappointed, Sir John Franklin, before his departure from England, resigned to him the boat which had been constructed for his own Naval Arctic Expedition. 'I think it,' wrote Sir John to a friend in March, 1845, 'of such importance to the Land Arctic Expedition which the Hudson's Bay Company are to equip, to be provided with the Cloth-boat, that I willingly resign mine for that service, and will take my chance of having another prepared for me.' The boat was completed for him in due time."

Then follows a footnote: "The Land Arctic Expedition above alluded to, has since these pages were put in type—successfully completed the important object to which it was originally directed. The party left Churchill, in Hudson's Bay, in July, 1846, under the command of Mr. Rae, who had been long employed in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company as a Surgeon in the interior of North America. The Expedition consisted of two open boats built for the purpose at York Factory, Hudson's Bay, having a complement of well-selected men. . . . After completing their Expedition of Discovery, they returned in safety to York Factory in September, 1847. It may be here added that Mr. Rae fully corroborates the favorable opinion entertained of the India-rubber Cloth-boat by his three brother Arctic adventurers above-named. . . . Mr. Rae also states that although the materials of which the Boat was constructed generally became stiffened and unpliable from the severity of the cold, there was no difficulty experienced in gradually warming it so as to be useful when its services were required."

Sir Edward Belcher was also familiar with the air boat, and recommended it for arctic service. "These Halkett boats," he writes in a footnote to his *Last of the Arctic Voyages* "are invaluable on any service, but, it occurs to me, especially so for the conveyance of wounded, arms, ammunition, etc. across streams."

II—BEECHEY ISLAND CACHE

In the early years of this century, James G. Marwick of Stromness, referred to above, interviewed William Irvine of that town and set down some of his reminiscences of his service with the Arctic whaling ships and with the Hudson's Bay Company. The results he read before the Guild of the North Church in Stromness in 1910. In the fall of 1927 his paper was published in the Orcadian, *but some of it is so interesting that we are reprinting here the part that has to do with Irvine's voyage to the Canadian Arctic ninety years ago, when he investigated the Beechey Island depot put up by Commander W. J. S. Pullen. We have asked George M. Douglas to explain here the origin of the cache.*

Introduction by G. M. Douglas

THE first traces of the missing Franklin ships were discovered at Beechey Island in 1851. There was much evidence to show the ships had spent the winter of 1845-46 in that place, but no records were found, nor anything to indicate in what direction the ships might have gone.

In 1852 a searching squadron was despatched by the Admiralty under the command of Sir Edward Belcher. It consisted of five vessels, one of which was ordered to remain at Beechey Island as a base and supply ship for the squadron. The *North Star*, Commander W. J. S. Pullen, was selected for this duty, part of which involved building a house ashore as a depot.

Commander Pullen had already distinguished himself in the Franklin Search by his boat voyage along the coast from Behring Straits to the Mackenzie River, and thence by Hudson's Bay Co.'s posts and boats to Fort York and London. (*Beaver* March and June, 1947.) Under Commander Pullen was his brother T. C. Pullen as Master, whose journal is included in the recently transcribed "Pullen Records." We owe this valuable addition to the history of the Arctic to Rear Admiral H. S. Pullen, R.C.N., grand nephew of the Pullen brothers of the *North Star*. I am greatly indebted to Rear Admiral Pullen for supplying me with a copy of these records, which include the journal

The double boat in its canvas cover. Top hats seem to have been standard equipment for explorers in those days. **Brit. Mus.**

of Master T. C. Pullen, and from this journal I have taken some notes concerning the building of the house, part of his many onerous duties.

Belcher's instructions were to build this depot on Beechey I. but there is no mention of any material with which to construct it. When crossing Baffin's Bay the squadron were in company with some whaling vessels which were crushed in the ice, and the wrecks supplied most of the required materials, especially the American whaler *McClellan* which got athwart the bows of the *North Star* and nearly wrecked her.

All the vessels of the Belcher Squadron had assembled at Beechey Island by August 11, 1852. Stores were transferred to the search vessels, which proceeded in their respective directions on Aug. 14th, leaving the *North Star* at Beechey Island to build the depot.

The start of this work was noted by Master T. Pullen on Aug. 26: "Sent a man ashore to dig holes for the posts and commenced landing the stores of the *McClellan* for use of the house and to build it." Mention is made occasionally of the progress of the work. On Sept. 3rd there is an entry to the effect that they found the material available only sufficient to make the house half the size intended. Commander Pullen in his report to Belcher says that through lack of material they were obliged to reduce the dimensions from 30′x60′ as intended to 25′x30′. Precise information as to the actual construction of walls and roof is lacking. In Commander Pullen's report, quoted above, he writes: "In the fid hole of one of the *McClellan's* topmasts in the North West corner a record relating to its establishment and a few coins were deposited. I gave it the name of 'Northumberland House' in honour of His Grace the First Lord of the Admiralty." Various comparatively recent photos of the remains of Northumberland House show the plates still in place over the post at the north-west corner so that record may still be there.

"Northumberland House" appears to have been used merely as a store house; but on July 17th, Master Pullen makes this entry in his journal: "Sir Edward Belcher arrives at Beechey Island and takes up his quarters in Northumberland House which had been prepared for him." Sir Edward left his flagship *Assistance* badly damaged and hopelessly beset by ice on the east side of Wellington Sound. He had travelled by sleigh at first and then by boat with a small party from the ship. He describes his arrival at Beechey Island after a trying journey in these words: "I was met by Captain Kellett, McClure, Pullen, and McClintock, and very shortly after safely lodged in the depot enjoying the appellation of 'Northumberland House.' Indeed from the care and attention manifest in

Part of the track of Franklin's ships is shown on this map. The heavy lines represent the coastline known at the time they sailed from England.

The depot ship "North Star" at Beechey Island in the winter of 1852-3. From a water colour, by courtesy of Rear Admiral H. F. Pullen, R.C.N.

all the preparations for my comfort by Captain Kellett and Pullen, I feel satisfied that I enjoyed myself infinitely more, and in my own way, than if I had been at that instant near Charing Cross. A hot bath and rest relieved me . . . at my usual hour I found myself at breakfast beside a very comfortable fire." Evidently "Northumberland House" did not lack comfort, and this was its supreme moment.

Belcher returned by boat to the *Assistance* after a few days, and finding her condition quite hopeless gave orders for abandoning her, and with her crew and what they could salvage in the way of instruments etc., returned to the *North Star* at Beechey Island. The crews of the various abandoned vessels returned to England on the *North Star* and transports sent by Admiralty. On leaving Beechey Island the depot "was left sealed and complete with every kind of supply for 60 men for one year. Within, in a powder case, every necessary document and information was secured."

Northumberland House remained undisturbed until Aug. 11, 1858, when it was visited by McClintock of the *Fox*. He "found the door open it must have been blown in by an easterly gale long ago, for much ice had accumulated immediately inside it. Most of the biscuit in bags was damaged, but everything else was in perfect order—the *Mary*, decked boat, and the two life boats were in excellent order. The gutta-percha [Halkett] boat was useless when left here and remains in the same state."

The whaler *Queen* was the next ship to visit Beechey Island, this was in 1865, as described in Irvine's story to which this in an introduction. Irvine's account shows Beechey Island depot much as described by McClintock seven years previously.

Captain Young of the *Pandora* who visited Beechey Island in 1878, has a sadly different story to tell. The depot had been totally ruined and destroyed "by bears," he supposed. Perhaps the news of the rich cache, defenseless against plunder, spread among the men of the whaling fleet when the *Queen* got back to Scotland and the "Blackguard Work" was done by men from a "Ruffian's Nest of whalers"—to use the terms employed by Master Pullen in describing their resort to wanton destruction when forced to abandon their vessels.

William Irvine's Tale

It was in the year 1865 the whaler *Queen* of Peterhead entered Stromness harbour with Brown in command. Ten Orkney men, besides Irvine, were engaged as hands and when signing articles they were asked to agree for 1½ years instead of one, in case from any chance the vessel might be nipped in the ice. Being a young man, Irvine readily volunteered, for he was as anxious as the next one to see sights and have something to talk about, and the rest did the same. In due time the *Queen* arrived at Pond's Bay and everyone thought they were in for a good thing because all round, the whales were blowing and immediately a boat was launched and manned. Somehow a fish was missed, and the boats' crews were about to give chase to another when, on looking at their vessel, the men were surprised to see a bucket at the mast head—a signal for all boats to return to the ship. This was reluctantly done and the boats were slung in the davits. All sail was set and everyone wondered at the skipper's action in leaving such splendid fishing grounds, and going, nobody knew where, but he had his own ideas, and so they asked no questions. Away to the nor'ard they went. Even the mate was at a loss to account for the skipper's mysterious action and, being a man who had a habit of speaking to himself, the men overheard him saying "I can't make the man out—the man must be mad—where on earth is he going—I would not have given me chance for £70."

Up Lancaster Sound they sailed, and of course never saw a fin, for there are no whales in that quarter. Land was sighted after some days sailing, and a couple of boats pulled ashore. It was by this time evident to all that it was on an exploring expedition that they were bound, but nothing of any consequence was found on this land for it was very barren. Two or three cairns, which had been plundered by the "Huskies," were seen, but nothing else. Many of the crew were none too well pleased at the idea of losing all chance of a full ship of whales, on the off chance of anything being picked up by exploring. What could they do? Simply nothing more than growl among themselves, which they did with a right good will.

All sail was again made and across Lancaster Sound they stood a second time, and after "not-a-bad" run, an island hove in sight. The skipper, who had some faint idea of his whereabouts, called it Beechey Island. The crew were all anxious to get ashore, although it looked bleak enough, and there was a very strong current. Three boats were lowered and Irvine was in one under the charge of the ship's doctor—a man called Philpot. It took them hours to reach land, the current was so strong, and the distance was deceiving owing to the height of the land. They pulled with a will at first, competing with each other as to which boat would land first. This was soon stopped, however, for after hours of pulling no land was reached and the men were quite exhausted.

Eventually a rocky point was reached and on the rocks above high water mark, was the name of some vessel written. Evidently it was some unfortunate whaler that had been wrecked here and this was all that told the tale. Among the great boulders lay casks and pieces of drift wood. Everyone was, by this time, feeling very hungry for they had tasted nothing since leaving the ships, and pulling is the one exercise that can give one an appetite. A special effort was made to round this point and once around, there opened a fine large bay quite clear of ice. As they advanced further, a most unusual, and unexpected sight, met their gaze. On the beach lay a sloop well above high water mark, while on ground rather higher up stood a small wooden shed. There were also two or three small boats lying close by. The sight put new life into the men who were pulling and they bent to their oars with renewed vigour and very soon the boats' keels were scraping the beach below the sloop. You can imagine the scene and also the men's feelings. The bare rocky island with not a vestige of animal or bird life anywhere to be seen; the house and sloop standing clearly distinct against the sky, and the three boats' crews of hungry men eager with suppressed excitement over their unexpected good luck, and buoyed up with the prospect of what the house contained.

Once on shore three right hearty British cheers were given, and the distant hills re-echoed them. The mate warned all hands not to wantonly destroy any goods, which the house might contain, and well it was he did so. Up the beach they ran for the house. The door was broken in, evidently the work of a polar bear when on a tour of inspection. Irvine was the fourth man to enter the house, and the sight he will never forget, he affirms. The house was literally packed with boxes, and cases, containing every conceivable kind of goods, preserved meat of many kinds, tinned fruits, biscuits, tea, sugar, coffee, jam, flour, clothing, boots, cork boots, suits of warm clothes, underwear of finest wool, pemmican in large tins, etc., in fact everything necessary for a ship's company for a period of many months—perhaps years. Everything was neatly and orderly piled up.

Those men, who entered first, found in a corner near a small window, a jar containing some liquid with a corkscrew attached. Immediately the cork was drawn, and seizing a "tinnie" which was standing handy, it was filled and handed round. The men, not knowing what the stuff was, but finding that it smelt like whiskey, hastily concluded it must be whiskey, and accordingly drank considerable quantities of it. Irvine also got a share, and he

A possible explanation of the strange action of the "Queen's" skipper in leaving the whaling grounds. The upper part of a poster offering a reward to whalers. Courtesy J. Goodwin

THREE THOUSAND POUNDS,

OR A PROPORTION THEREOF, ACCORDING TO THE SERVICES RENDERED,

OFFERED BY LADY FRANKLIN,

With the view of inducing any Whaling Ships which shall resort to Davis Strait and Baffin Bay to make special efforts in search of the expedition under the command of Sir John Franklin,—I hereby offer the sum of Three Thousand Pounds, (£3000) or a proportion thereof, according to the services rendered, to such ship or ships as, departing from the usual fishing grounds, shall discover, and, if needed, afford effectual relief to the above expedition, or to any portion of it.

said it burnt like fire and no wonder for it was nothing less than spirits of wine [alcohol] placed handy for lighting purposes in a small spirit stove, which was also found. Irvine made for the door and the effects of the fire-water soon were gone, but those who remained indoors were made drunk. Irvine went round to the back, and in a kind of box arrangement, found a considerable quantity of papers, but from the mate's orders he did not touch them. The skipper later on was very much disappointed that they were left.

By this time all the men were at the house and were busy helping themselves to whatever they wanted. Each man took a pair of cork boots, and some took a couple of pairs, and everybody had a D.B. reefer coat besides underclothing. Irvine helped himself along with the others. I have the identical coat which he took from that far away Beechey Island, and a good friend it was to him on many occasions. It went with him to Greenland seal fisheries and Davis Straits many times, and if it could speak, could tell many wonderful tales.

But to continue the yarn. The men were now in the best of spirits, both figuratively, and actually, for they had stumbled across many kegs of rum, one of which they opened and from the same "tinnie" from which the spirits of wine had been drunk, they now drained the best rum. They all had a good square meal from the preserved meat, and biscuits, and with their various burdens of goods, they made for the boats. The mate took a couple of kegs of rum on board and ordered the remainder to be neatly squared up before leaving. The door was properly hung and made secure and once more they set out for the *Queen*. It was only after very considerable difficulty she was reached, for the men did not seem in a humour for pulling.

This bay was the place where Sir John Franklin and his gallant explorers spent their first winter, and this house, and sloop, are mentioned in Captain McClintock's book entitled "Franklin's Fate." They probably were left here by search parties, in the hope that if any of the expedition reached Beechey Island again, they would find sufficient provisions to last them until help arrived. When Irvine was having a tour of inspection outside, he saw the tombstone which Lady Franklin caused to be erected here, in memory of the brave men who perished in the expedition.

Members of the "St. Roch" crew of 1944 at the Beechey Island memorial erected by Belcher in honour of the men who died on his expedition, including Lieut. Bellot. The tablet (foreground) was later sent out by Lady Franklin in memory of her husband. H. A. Larsen

III—A FRANKLIN SHIP?

IN elaboration of the Packet note published in the Autumn *Beaver*, describing the sighting of a ship in the ice off the mouth of Back's River in 1855, Dr. J. B. Tyrrell has furnished copies of the correspondence he had sixty-two years ago relating to that subject. In January, 1893, he wrote to J. A. Campbell at Norway House asking him to interview Thomas Mustagan, one of the three men on the Anderson search expedition who were supposed to have seen the ship in the ice. Mr. Campbell replied that Mustagan had given him the following account:

"Paulet, Edward Kipling and I were sent off from the camp on the Mainland, in an inflated waterproof canoe [Halkett boat] to examine a chain of Islands running far out to sea. There was open water between these islands, and we proceeded from island to island, searching for remains as we went along. We found something on one of the islands, but I do not remember what it was. When we came to the last island but one, it was thought advisable that I, being the heaviest man in the party, should get out of the canoe, which was hardly up to our weight, and allow the other two to go on to the last island, which lay a long distance off. I was accordingly left behind. When my companions returned from this Island, which was high and rocky, they reported that they had seen nothing. The Expedition turned back shortly afterward.

"After we were disbanded, Paulet told me and others at Norway House that he had seen a ship from the lofty island in question, and that he had begged Kipling to say nothing about it, because, if it were known that the ship was there, an attempt would be made to reach it, their frail craft would be crushed to pieces in the moving ice, and they would surely perish. On someone suggesting that he might have been mistaken, Paulet replied, 'It was a very clear day and I have seen the ship at York [Factory] too often to be deceived'."

Mr. Campbell suggested that Dr. Tyrrell ask J. B. Johnson of Fisher River, Man., to interview Paulet himself, and in May Mr. Johnson replied, saying he had done so. Paulet had told him that he had met an Eskimo fishing at the mouth of a river, who said that a ship had been "ruined" and plenty of people had died. The Eskimo showed him by signs where the ship was "all broken." "It was Paulet *only*," wrote Mr. Johnson, "who from the summit of a rocky island saw quite distinctly what he still believes to have been two masts of a ship. He says had there been more sticks standing around it would have been easy to have made a mistake. But there was nothing but rocks and ice as far as he could see. . . . He thinks the distance from the summit of the rock to the object he saw was about five miles. This is all he has to say about the matter, which was told to me in a quiet, deliberate manner leaving no room whatever to doubt his veracity or the sincerity of his belief. . . . I must confess to being very much impressed with the man's statement, knowing as I do that where eyesight is concerned how very keen an Indian's is and how they will detect objects at a distance which you or I would overlook twenty times." ◆

Fur Trade Gossip Sheet

by Bernard Rogan Ross

VOYAGES by York boat over the regular routes of the old fur trade must have been pretty tedious, especially for those who knew exactly what was around the next bend in the river or the next point of land on the lakeshore. And on one of these voyages, 110 years ago, Bernard Rogan Ross tried to relieve the monotony of the trip by writing a "newspaper," couched in the journalistic style of the period, about the doings of the people on his brigade of three boats proceeding slowly up the Churchill (or English) River towards the Methy Portage. Although his writing was extremely fine and small, the issue of August 8, 1845, of this *Athabasca Journal and English River Inquirer*, as he called it, took up eleven closely-written pages of foolscap. Fortunately it was preserved by his daughter, Mrs. George A. Graham, and later published in part in the Fort William *Daily Times-Journal* of December 27, 1928. From this copy the following extracts have been made.

The paper is dated at Bear Island Lake, on the upper Churchill north of Lac la Ronge, in what is now Saskatchewan, and carries the announcement that the next issue would be published the following week at Ile à la Crosse. The price is stated to be sixpence per customer payable, not in cash, but in Saskatchewan pemmican.

The first page is devoted to "Shipping Intelligence." "Governor" Campbell is Chief Trader Colin Campbell, then in charge of the Athabasca District. "Mr. Murray" is Alexander Hunter Murray who founded Fort Yukon two years later, and who had just joined the Company. He was shortly to marry one of Campbell's "two interesting daughters." As for the "Duchess of Kent," she was evidently a corpulent Indian squaw who tried to maintain an air of dignity. The first article begins:

"The new and fast sailing ship, *Lion*—Tourangeau, commander—arrived at this post last night and will leave (weather permitting), tomorrow morning at precisely 4 o'clock a.m. for Athabasca District, with goods for that place, Governor Campbell—and his two interesting daughters—are passengers in this splendid vessel.

"The fast sailing and newly repaired ship, *Queen*—Flett, master—will leave exactly one minute after the departure of the *Lion*, for the same post, loaded also with goods for Athabasca. Mr. Stuart, of Quebec, and Mr. Murray, from the Missouri, are passengers for McKenzie River.

"The *Unity*—Blondin, master—has a number of cabin passengers for Fort Chippewyan and adjacent country. Amongst the ladies of quality on board—we would notice—that no less a personage than the Dutchess of Kent has honored this noble barge with her patronage and has taken state rooms for the accommodation of her Royal Highness and suite."

Then follows some scandalous comment on the lady in question, retailing some of her recent misdoings.

"However," the story continues, "on passing the Pas, a missionary station of the Saskatchewan River, she here repented of her former misspent life and was convicted and corrected by the French priest in the place. It soon became known to all that a grand ceremony was about to be performed and multitudes flocked to the chapel to witness the same.

"Her Highness the Dutchess of Kent here made confession, was baptized and married according to the rules of that church. The favoured one to whom she gave her hand was no other than her former travelling companion.

"Her Highness was so much overcome by the solemnity of the occasion that she required assistance to regain the barge. She was dressed most gorgeously in a blue cloth gown, blue leggings garnished with beads, moose skin shoes (plain), a printed cotton shawl, a colored silk handkerchief around her head, with a splendid walking cane in her hand. Her hair of raven black flowed loosely on her shoulders and her appearance was most imposing.

At this time the Oregon boundary question was a lively topic of conversation. By the time this account was written it had already been settled for nearly two months; but the news had not yet reached Athabasca, and Ross wrote:

"The Dutchess . . . answered him with one of those sweet and amiable smiles."
James Simpkins

"On seriously reflecting and maturely considering what might be the result by the non-settlement of this question, we give as our humble opinion that it is not altogether improbable, but the Americas might take it into their minds to try a game at Ball and Bayonet with their ancient enemies, but let them look out for the consequences. Canada can almost defend herself, but troops to any amount can be—and even now are pouring into it from England. The Columbia would be defended in a similar manner. Our vast navy would blockade every port on the seaboard of the United States, and more dreadful than all—the Athabasca Brigade and McKenzie River ditto and each [every] other belonging to the Northern Department would to a man rally round the banner of the Honble. H. B. Co. and, led on to glory by their famous and gallant leader, sally forth on the foes of their Queen and Country, lay waste the North-western States with fire and sword, nor cease until the British flag waved triumphantly throughout the Union. We would once more, before concluding this article, advise Brother Jonathan to consider on these consequences and be cautious in his proceedings."

Under the heading, "Ungentlemanly and Disgraceful Conduct of Captain Tourangeau of the Ship *Lion*," the author takes another sly dig at the Duchess:

"Yesterday while the vessels were ascending a very strong rapid, so strong that part of the cargoes had to be transported by land, so that the vessels would be thereby enabled to get up in safety . . . Her Highness the Dutchess (as has been always her custom and we contend is quite allowable from her high rank) preferred remaining on board the *Unity* to the harrassing and fatiguing experience of walking across the portage, and in this instance seemed particularly inclined to recline on her couch on the quarter deck of the *Unity*, feeling as she herself stated, slightly indisposed. [But] Captain Tourangeau, who was piloting this noble craft through those dangerous rapids, seems to have very little respect for a George the Fourth beauty."

The Duchess, it is pointed out, differs somewhat from the "fair, fat and forty" type, in that she is "black, d—d fat, and sixty." "This as it may be," the story goes on, "the Captain showed himself everything but a Gentleman by his treatment of that amiable lady, and ordered her to tramp, as the others were doing, so that the barge might be lightened. The Dutchess, in conformity with her excellent and forbearing character, answered him, with one of those sweet and amiable smiles, that she was unable to comply with his request. Whereupon the Captain most inhumanly and unceremoniously and violently laid hands on Her Royal Highness, and shoved her on shore, amongst barren rocks and fallen timber, and certain it is that she had to walk, not being able to procure a carriage at that place, unless sending to the Red River Settlement, which would have been too late to overtake the vessel at the upper end of the portage.

Another of the passengers, probably Stuart, comes in for some sarcastic remarks under the heading, "Remarkable Feat: Wonderful Strength:"

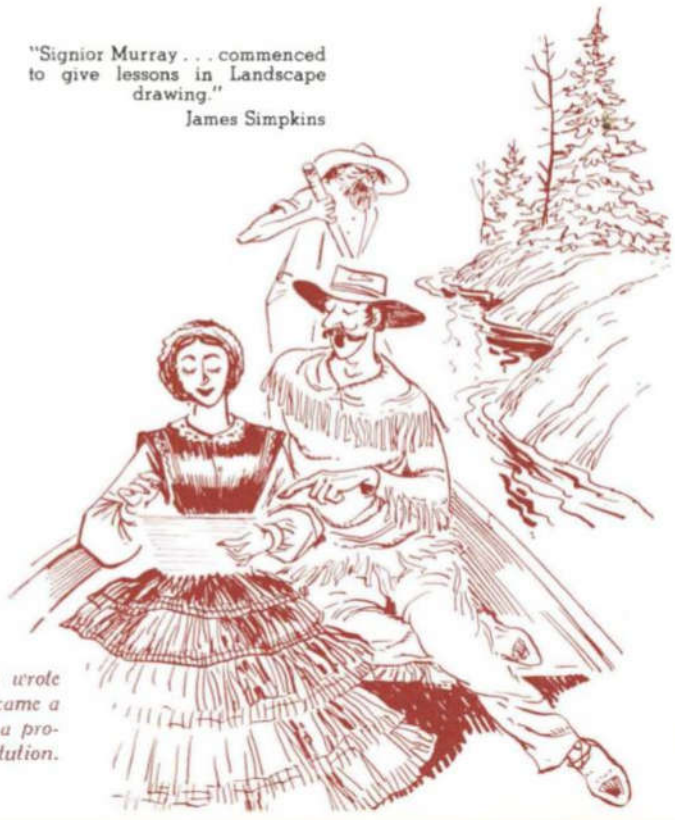
"A Young Gentleman from Quebec, passenger on board the *Queen* and journeying to McKenzie River, on the 2nd instant, while crossing a portage of great extent, he, perceiving the men to be hard pushed in conveying the pieces across the portage, and sympathizing with them in their labour, was actually seen to carry from the beginning or foot of the portage, to the end or head thereof, two whole pieces of goods weighing at least 90 pounds each, and not once resting on the way. The distance we should say was about 300 yards—more or less. Several individuals informed us that they witnessed this extraordinary feat, which we were at first inclined to discredit, but on their mentioning that they were willing to take oaths on the same, our doubts no longer remained; we have, therefore, concluded that it is a fact.

"This young gentleman is of a herculean stature, about 5 ft. 10½ in. in height, and if such a feat could be expected from any one in this northern country, we should say he was very likely to perform the same. Various rumours are afloat as to the cause of such supernatural strength, most of which we have put very little faith in, but the fact of a Brandy keg having been tapped that day inclines us to surmise that the excellent qualities of that cordial must have acted on his nervous system to a great extent and that he had imbibed extra strength therefrom."

The final paragraph in the newspaper refers, perhaps, to Murray's attentions to Miss Anne Campbell:

"Signior Murray takes this opportunity of returning his sincere thanks to the Nobility, Gentries and Public for the support he has received since he commenced to give lessons in Landscape drawing. He begs leave here to state that he still continues to teach that valuable branch of education and will attend any hour for the purpose of sketching from nature. Fees, as formerly, Gentlemen, 10/6 pr. lesson: Ladies, gratis." ◆

"Signior Murray . . . commenced to give lessons in Landscape drawing."
James Simpkins



Chief Trader Ross, F.R.G.S., was only eighteen when he wrote this account, and this was apparently his first trip west. He became a well known naturalist (Ross's Goose), an anthropologist, and a prolific contributor to the British Museum and Smithsonian Institution.

Entente Cordiale

Two hundred years ago, when Anthony Henday was absent from York Factory on his famous western journey to the Blackfeet, the chief at York, James Isham, received a letter from The Pas—not from Henday, but from a rival French trader. The letter was delivered to him on July 8, 1754, by an Indian who had probably stopped at The Pas to trade. It was headed "le 8 de Joutte soute au pa 1754" and was addressed to "Monsieur le Commandan du for de la bé dunson de la bé dunson," meaning, we presume, "of the Hudson's Bay fort on Hudson's Bay."

Anyway, Isham received the letter, made as close a translation as he could, and sent to London the original letter, an English version of it, and a copy of his reply. The English version reads:

"Saute au pas 8th July 1754 [the same date as it was received at York]
"Translation of a letter from a low Ignorant fellow
"Sir I take the liberty of writing you these lines to let you know of our news which are good God be praised. I wish that yours may be the same as mine. Sir, if you will please to give the bearer what I am going to ask you Sir If it is your good pleasure to send me 5 brase of Tobacco and then a pair of double shoes and then a fine tin box and then a fiddle & strings as many as you can Sir, as to the payment youll let me know it I shall send it you by good hands the next spring you will do me a good deal of pleasure because I am in want. Sir if I forgot something you will do me a good deal of pleasure [sic] Sir I desire you to excuse me because I am in haste Sir I finish I am your very affectionate servant

John Baptise P
Trader on Negociating
at The Pas"

There are several reasons why this letter is particularly interesting. One is the address—the first time, we believe, that the modern name of The Pas was placed on record. (The name of the French fort there was spelt variously Basquia, Paskoyat, Poskoyac, etc.) Another reason is that the French trader was evidently trying to establish commercial relations with his English rival whose depot was so much closer to The Pas than Montreal was.

The similarity in dates is hard to explain. It is not due to the difference between the new and old style calendars, because York Fort had adopted the new one when Britain did in September 1752. Perhaps the French trader had simply lost track of the days since he had left Montreal.

At any rate, Isham sent him a reply that read as follows:

"To John Baptist
prove of Guison York Fort July the 8th 1754
Sr.
By the Bearrer I recd. a Letter from You, which being wrote bad could not make it out by what I understand, You want a Confedericy, also some instruments &c which I have not also a pipe to be mended but the Bearer had no such thing. [No pipe is mentioned in Isham's translation of the Frenchman's letter or in the French original.] As I do not know Your Intention I cannot give a derect Answare to Your letter

I Rest
Sr. Yours Unknown
James Isham."

Which seems to have been the end of a beautiful friendship.

A comparison of the first letter with the original shows that what Isham's translator thought was "prove of Guison" was simply "proux négausian." In other words, the French trader's name was Jean-Baptiste Proux, and *négausian* was simply his way of spelling *négociant*. Learned *Canadien* friends have aided us in translating the original French, and they have pointed out that a man called Jean-Baptiste Proux, Proulx, or Prou worked for various traders on the Great Lakes in the 1740s, and in 1757 was in business for himself at Michilimackinac.

Incidentally, Joseph Prou, who was probably a relative, signed up in 1735 with "Jos. Outelas," the son of John Outlaw, a ship's captain who served the H B C in the 1680s, and who seems to have made a specialty of being captured by the French—the first time while serving with some New England interlopers at Port Nelson in 1682, the third in 1689 at Fort Albany. Three years after that he married a French girl at Quebec, where he was apparently working for Frontenac, and where he died in 1697, the year of Joseph's birth.

There's more we could tell you about these curious French-*Anglais* connections, but perhaps we'd better stop before we (and this Packet note) become even more involved.

Old Letters

Recently some old letters written by Company officers to others in the service came to light, and two of them contain passages which will bear quoting here. One, from J. G. McTavish to Samuel Black, dated at York Factory July 20, 1829, foreshadows the "Rae method" of arctic exploration. Black was planning a trip to the Arctic, and McTavish wrote:

"I confess all your plan smacks too large for my private opinion—for I am strongly inclined to think that a Gentleman to succeed without fuss has only to put himself into the hands of the Esqx. [Eskimos] with one trusty Servant—for the fewer mouths to feed the better—and he will attain his object."

The other passage is found in a letter written at York Factory Sept. 5, 1831, by Thomas Kennedy to Thomas Isbister, who was evidently thinking of returning to the Old Country. Some of it has a curiously modern ring:

"By accounts from Home the state of Europe is no ways flattering for one to leave such a fine country as this to return to. All the powers on the Continent seem either to be in a state of Revolution or on the eve of going to war. We are well off in this country compared with the conditions of thousands at Home, and yet we are not sensible of or thankful for the blessings we enjoy."

S. S. Colvile

In the autumn issue of the *Beaver* there was a photo taken by Robert Bell of the S.S. *Colvile* at Lower Fort Garry; and the caption stated that this was "believed to be the only photo extant" of that vessel, which was "the first screw steamer on Lake Winnipeg." Now Mr. Loudon Wilson of Fair Haven, Michigan, a careful student of early North American steamboating, writes in to say that he begs to differ with both these statements.

He himself has a stereopticon photo of the *Colvile* at Norway House Landing taken by F. Jay Haynes of Fargo, N.D., about 1880, which was evidently the basis for the engraving of that scene appearing in *Picturesque Canada* by George M. Grant. And he points out that the first screw steamer on Lake Winnipeg was actually the *Chief Commissioner* built in 1872-3, not the *Colvile* which was built (at Grand Forks) two years later.

But this is what makes the Bell photo doubly interesting. Mr. Wilson adds that the C.C. was not a success, and was dismantled. Her engines were transferred to her successor, and her hull was used as a floating wharf at Lower Fort Garry. The photo therefore shows both the first and second screw steamers—or what remained of the first—side by side in the Red River at the place called Colvile Landing. Now if anybody knows of another picture of the *Chief Commissioner*, we should like to hear about it.

Old Pianos

Two interesting letters have come in relative to James McCook's article on pioneers' pianos in the last *Beaver*. One is from Major J. S. Matthews, City Archivist of Vancouver, B.C., saying that he owns a piano which has been in what is now Canada for 95 years. It arrived in 1860 at Victoria where duty was paid on it. Shortly afterwards it was taken over to New Westminster on the mainland, where duty was again paid on it in the Crown colony of British Columbia as distinct from the Crown colony of Vancouver Island. There it was used by the Royal Engineers, who left in 1863. Later it found a home at Yale, at Hope, and at Princeton, and sometime during its chequered career someone gave it a coat of barn paint.

The other letter came from Hayward Parsons, former district manager for the H B C and brother of Fur Trade Commissioner Ralph Parsons who built the Company's first Arctic trading post. In 1912 "R.P." took a portable organ up to Lake Harbour, Baffin Island; but neither he nor any member of his staff (including his brother) had any notion of how to get a tune out of it.

"But there was the organ," writes Mr. Parsons, "and Ralph was determined that Sunday services would be held, with hymns set to music. I was detailed to find a solution to the problem, so the keys were numbered consecutively and after many hours of practice the tune would eventually be discovered. As time went by our singing became so lusty and the music so soothing that even the husky dogs were awed into silence. Yes, that little portable organ, more than forty years ago, did much to help us in our isolation."

Cover

Some readers, looking at the seal hunter on the front cover of this issue, may wonder why he chose to wear a red hat while stalking seals behind that white screen. The fact is that the seal is as colour-blind as a dog—or a bull—and probably sees little difference between red and grey or green. The picture was taken by Peter Murdoch on the remarkable living-off-the-country trip he and Kudluk made in the spring of 1953, in search of "The Old Shipwreck" (*Beaver* March 1954). Some hunters look, and shoot, over the white cotton screen; others through a hole in it. The seal, incidentally, is a *netchiluarsuk*, or old jar seal.

Beaver Index

The index of the *Beaver* from October 1920 to March 1954 is now ready for distribution. If you want a copy and have not already ordered one, we suggest you do so shortly. It is the same size as the magazine and consists of 65 pages. The price, postpaid, is $2.75 a copy.

NORTHERN BOOKS

WHEN THE GRASS WAS FREE, written and illustrated by E. F. Hagell. The Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1954. 128 pages. $3.25.

Reviewed by R. M. Patterson

MR. Hagell's attractive book gives the reader a view of southern Alberta from Chin Coulee to the Crowsnest Pass and from the Montana line north to the Big Bow. Much of the book is in the form of dialogue and the view in question is seen through the eyes of old timers, met together and talking while their horses graze around them—or is set forth in the talk of cowhands and horsebreakers gathered round the bunkhouse stove, or playing poker in the tent of some storm-bound roundup camp.

The dialogue is well done, racy and free. The opinions expressed are naturally those of the rancher as opposed to those of the farmer. They may in places be the outcome of hindsight as well as of foresight, since the crime and the folly of breaking up and farming much of the semi-arid shortgrass country of the south and south-west was made all too obvious in the great drought of the hungry thirties, when the soil flew and the tumbleweed rolled and whole areas were abandoned to dust and weeds, broken down fences and unpainted, derelict buildings.

Be that as it may, there is much of truth to be found expressed here in the free and forceful language of the West—much of it eminently quotable.

Alberta is not so very old as a province. Old timers still remember it as part of the Northwest Territories, happy and comparatively tax-free but controlled from the east. "Cast iron brains, that's the kind Otterwa allers used as fur as this country was concerned . . .", and so in came the settlers, even into the most unsuitable places, "turning the grassland upside down, as the Indian put it. In some of the drier districts it has proved to be the wrong-side up!"

" 'Look at this grass, boys,' says King. 'Now ain't it a shame how them damn weasels has tore up all that country north of the Bow? She's so bloody gravelly underneath she won't grow grass for a goose, and them simple bastards expect to grow wheat'." By one who saw the last of the unfenced prairies in the Peace River country—grass as far as the eye could see, grass "till hell wouldn't have it," and all free—that sentiment is most heartily applauded.

In a country of magnificent views, that from the southern spurs of the Porcupine Hills is one of the most splendid—and it looks best over the head of a horse. Everything that Mr. Hagell says about that view (Chapter XIV) is true. The same applies to his accounts of the fierce blizzards of that open country and its equally wild Chinooks—and the incessant wind of the Old Man River which can roll rocks down the streets of Macleod, and once even whipped out a Toronto drummer's dentures on a particularly savage gust and sent them spinning down the Lethbridge trail.

Mr. Hagell's stories and his numerous and attractive sketches and colour plates portray faithfully the spirit of the country—and of the sketches none more so than that of the horse and rider plugging through the storm in crusted snow, and the domestic detail of the "still life study," as one might call it, in which the rider sits at his ease in his cabin, with his feet in the open oven and his chaps and bridle hanging where chaps and bridle should hang in cold weather when the day's work is done—behind the kitchen stove. That gives the authentic touch and shows that Mr. Hagell has indeed "been there"—for the bit of that bridle will be warm and ready for his horse's mouth in the morning.

CANADA'S FLYING HERITAGE, by Frank H. Ellis. University of Toronto Press, 1954. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press. 388 pages. $7.95.

Reviewed by Walter Gilbert

Canada's Flying Heritage represents the culmination of what must have been a monumental task. As the reader delves into its pages he becomes increasingly aware of the years and years of painstaking effort which were required for its preparation. No matter how close he may be to Canadian aviation he will encounter, time after time, fascinating new side-lights. The illustrations alone form a unique historical collection. Indeed, he may find, as I did, that the book he picked for casual examination is still in his hands, hours later.

There will be some criticism of the technical and other inaccuracies which certainly exist in the book. Such criticism may be justified but it should also be qualified. Had the author been able to devote his entire time to the book for all these past thirty years, he would still have been liable to error. It is a simple fact that, in telling such an involved story covering such a lengthy period of time, human memory fails and witnesses tend to disagree. Let us remember that Mr. Ellis accomplished his purpose as a part-time occupation while continuing to earn his daily bread in a very different walk of life.

There is one very important omission which should not pass unremarked (since if this error is not pointed out now it may go unnoticed for a long time—no one is likely to undertake another book of this sort for many years to come). The period 1927-1941 was what might be called the "Golden Age" of bush-flying in Canada, a time when our country is believed to have led the entire world in air-freight tonnage and miles flown. One man was the driving force which made this whole development possible. It

Mr. Gilbert is a former Canadian bush pilot who was the first to fly over the Magnetic Pole (Beaver *March 1936*). *He now lives in Walla Walla, Wash.*

was the late James A. Richardson of Winnipeg who poured millions of dollars and countless hours of personal effort into every branch of the budding aviation industry. Western Canada Airways (later Canadian Airways), the NAME, Cyril Knight Prospecting Company, Quebec Airways, Dominion Skyways, Arrow Airways, Canadian Vickers, Fairchild of Canada, all benefited by his drive and his material aid.

In 1927 (see page 232) it was Western Canada Airways which "rescued" the federal government from its dilemma after it had exhausted every other effort to get its freight to Churchill—and the cost was a mere $14,000. The section between pages 243 and 262 refers almost entirely to exploits by the numerous Richardson enterprises: indeed the real story of the "lost" MacAlpine Expedition is not so much the fact of the party getting itself lost, as the skill and daring behind the search for the missing men. Outstanding in this episode, as throughout the entire period, was the indomitable genius for repair work displayed by T. A. (Tommy) Siers and his maintenance crews. Canada's entry into the atomic age (p. 248) was by way of a Richardson plane (the pilot was C. H. "Punch" Dickins and the passengers Gilbert LaBine and Dr. Bannerman, with Charles St. Paul following on a later trip).

Referring to early air-mails (p. 359) Dickens was an employee of WCA and not Commercial Airways. In fact, WCA planes carried courtesy mail on all flights. As to the winners of the McKee Trophy (page 360) Z. L. (Louis) Leigh received his instrument training with CAL, then in turn trained other pilots who eventually formed the nucleus of TCA's original staff. Among McKee winners from the Richardson companies were Oaks, Dickins, May, Gilbert, Vachon and Siers: also (p. 356) the only Canadian winner of the Harmon Trophy, Fred Stevenson. When war broke out it was to Mr. Richardson that Sir Edward Beatty appealed for assistance in directing the Atlantic Ferry Command, and C. H. Dickins was sent in response to that appeal. His success was noteworthy.

James A. Richardson has passed on but his vision and accomplishments should be kept for posterity. The omission of the story of the force which carried Canada's aviation through the critical "between the Wars" period throws the whole history considerably out of balance. It fails to stress the fact that the pioneers of Canadian aviation were by no means confined to those who occupied the headlines, but rather included the all-important "men behind the men behind the throttle."

Frank Ellis's book is not written for experts only. It is decidedly readable, all the way through. One is carried along as a close and interested bystander and ends with a new glow of pride in his country's achievements. Its author will be remembered as the man who saved Canada's early air history from the limbo of forgotten things in which it came so close to being lost. If by chance he has been helped along the way by other Canadians who aided in—and also profited by— the "Business of Aviation," then their contribution is no more than their minimum obligation to posterity. The honour is all Frank Ellis's.

JASPER, by James Simpkins. The Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1954. $2.50.

Reviewed by Clifford Wilson

JIMMY Simpkins, the creator of Jasper, the bear that talks like a man, is well known to the regular readers of this magazine. He has been drawing cartoons for the *Beaver* since 1937 and at one time was its staff artist. He has the happy faculty of giving his animals human expressions without destroying their essential character as animals; and with bears, which remind men so much of men, he has full play for his talents.

"Jasper" has been appearing regularly in *Maclean's* for several years, and is now such a celebrated Canadian character that publishing a collection of his adventures in book form is definitely a logical step to take.

As the father of five children (to whom the book is dedicated), Mr. Simpkins must get quite a few of his cartoon ideas from watching his own family. At any rate, a number of them in this book have to do with kids as well as cubs—and sometimes the tables are nicely turned. "I don't care where you found him. You can't keep him," growls Jasper like any human father when his two cubs bring a small boy home to the family den. And in another picture Jasper and his children are delighted to find a human baby in his play-pen cage. The universal father speaks again when Jasper admonishes his cubs at the top of a toboggan slide: "This is the last time down—it's two months past your bedtime already!"

Almost all of his adventures take place in his native Alberta mountains. But occasionally Jasper finds himself in a zoo, in a hotel, on a city street, on the stage of a theatre, or even in London, at the Coronation and at No. 10 Downing street. Most of the time he is genial and co-operative. But sometimes he's like a bear with a sore head. (*q.v.*)

SON OF THE NORTH, by Charles Camsell. Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1954. 256 pages. $5.00.

Reviewed by R. C. Wallace

IT is particularly fitting that the *Beaver* should publish a review of Dr. Camsell's autobiographical *Son of the North*. For the author is not only a son of the North, he belongs as well to the Hudson's Bay Company family. His father was one of the outstanding men in the Hudson's Bay Company service in the Mackenzie Valley; his sister was married to a Hudson's Bay Company factor; and a brother, if I mistake not, was in Hudson's Bay Company service in the days when I resided in Winnipeg. Like so

Dr. Wallace, who died on January 29, was executive director of the Arctic Institute. He had been professor of geology at the University of Manitoba, president of the University of Alberta, and principal of Queen's. A year ago he contributed an article on a fellow-Orcadian, Dr. John Rae, to the Rae number of this magazine.

many of the sons of the Company's factors from the North, he went to St. John's College School in Winnipeg. Northward from the school the Red River Valley was peopled with men and women that had ties with the Company. It goes without saying that the book finds a place by right in the literature of .the Hudson's Bay Company.

The earliest years in a man's life seem the most vivid, the most colourful, and the most easily remembered. It is significant that almost two-thirds of the autobiography are taken up with the first twenty-six years of the author's life, before he accepted a position in the Geological Survey of Canada, and entered the door to extraordinarily fruitful years in the public service of his country. To those of us who have known him as a scientist and administrator for over thirty years, it might appear that these early days have been given undue attention, particularly when one finds that his work as Deputy Minister of Mines has been passed over somewhat lightly. A man who writes his own biography, particularly if he is a modest man, as the author is, is hampered. Dr. Camsell could not say, as he was entitled to say, that he was one of the most successful administrators that Ottawa has known. Charlie Camsell, as he was universally known, was honoured and respected at home and abroad, and loved by all who knew him. This part of his life could only be written by someone else. His readers will be grateful that he has given us an extraordinarily vivid story of his travels as a young man through the Mackenzie valley, the experiences that he gained in roughing it in summer and in winter in the days when travel was not easy; and the significant journey to Great Bear Lake and the Coppermine River as a helper to Dr. Mackintosh Bell, who gave Dr. Camsell the idea of preparing for service with the Geological Survey, and who paved the way for the discovery of pitchblende by Gilbert LaBine on Great Bear Lake twenty-nine years later. Much of these early experiences was unknown even to his friends, and they are told well. Few, if any, have come into the Canadian service better equipped to meet the demands that Canada makes on her northern explorers. The author has the additional distinction of adding another story to the already large collection of bear stories for which this continent is famous. It is the story of the bear who carried a dollar bill ready for any emergency. The emergency naturally presented itself.

Here is the story of the lifework of a great Canadian who has done more than anyone else in his time to stimulate development in minerals and in power, and to open up the Northland. The story is told simply, modestly, artistically, and thrillingly. It conveys a clear picture of conditions in the Mackenzie Valley around the turn of the century. Without setting out to do so, it pays high tribute to the government services of Canada and the permanent staff. Only in a high level of service could a man such as Charles Camsell be encouraged to do such great work. The book gives us a significant chapter in the history of Canadian development. It will have many readers.

THE NOR'WESTERS, by Marjorie Wilkins Campbell. Great Stories of Canada Series. Macmillan Company, Toronto, 1954. 176 pages. $2.00.

Reviewed by Julia Jarvis

THIS is a book much needed, difficult to do, and well done. It is needed because even people who are familiar with Canadian history know little about the Nor'Westers; it has been difficult to do because the subject covers a large number of personalities, a period of half a century, and a stage of half a continent; and it is well done because Mrs. Campbell has neatly and vividly simplified the story.

The fur-trade is the story of Canada's first "big business;" but it is also a bold adventure story. The Scottish merchants who moved in after the conquest of Canada took over the methods and routes of the French *coureurs de bois*, and developed a fur-trade empire which spread eventually across the whole continent. When these traders found that their enterprises suffered from competition amongst themselves, they drew up an agreement creating the North West Company, in which they all held shares. As its partners pushed westward in search of furs, they drafted the first maps of the continent; and it was one of them—Sir Alexander Mackenzie—who discovered the overland route to the Pacific. They made themselves "lords of the lakes and forests," and masters of the Indian tribes; and it was even said that they dominated the government of Canada.

All this while, the Hudson's Bay Company had held a monopoly from the Crown which their servants apparently wished to interpret as exclusive rights to the entire fur-trade. They had sat tight on the shores of Hudson Bay while the Indians brought furs to them; but when they found that "the pedlars from Quebec" were cutting off their supplies inland at the source, they began themselves to explore and build trading-posts. Inevitably the two companies met and clashed. The Nor'Westers more than held their own; and when it appeared that amalgamation was the only solution to the competition which was ruining them both, it would seem that the Nor'Westers held the best cards. But they were rugged individualists, and they failed to present a united front, while the Hudson's Bay Company's powerful shareholders in England acted as a unit. The resulting union in 1821 meant the end of the North West Company. Many of the Nor'Westers were absorbed into the Hudson's Bay Company, and they brought to it revitalizing new blood.

The author has an easy style which is deceptive. Her narrative might appear to be coloured by a vivid imagination; but the fact is that it contains innumerable details condensed artfully from careful study. She has thoroughly absorbed the "ancient North West spirit," and this has given character and sympathy to all her pages. The book is attractively printed and bound, with black and white illustrations by Illingworth Kerr. It has a hand-drawn map as endpapers, and a striking jacket made from one of Arthur Heming's paintings.

Miss Jarvis is editor and executive secretary-treasurer of the Champlain Society.

Handsome Brute — Don Blair

With Byrd to the Antarctic . . .
Hudson's Bay
point Blankets
famous the world over
for a lifetime of
luxurious comfort
and warmth.
With climbing expeditions to Everest . . .